

1.0 Purpose

The Design Development Framework (DDF) arose from a straightforward question posed by members of the VTA Board of Directors:

How can VTA ensure world-class Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is built on the block that will house the Downtown San José BART Station, where VTA owns most of the block?

The DDF is the result of extensive analysis of the Downtown VTA Block, VTA and City goals and requirements, and other factors that go into creating world-class TOD. It is not intended to serve as a plan, rather as a resource for VTA, other property owners, developers, members of the public, and others to use to inform future work to develop the Block.

The VTA Block, which includes the future Downtown San José BART station, represents an incredible development opportunity, one which will draw upon the rich history of the city center and reinforce its key location between transit and institutional, cultural, and recreational destinations. The heart of this new development will be focused around the creation of a bustling zone of pedestrian activity and a shared common space, with commuters mixing with residents, students, workers, and visitors to create an active urban environment, both day and night.

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Overall Goals

With the vision in mind for the VTA Block to contribute to a vibrant urban environment while building from Downtown's rich history, VTA commissioned this DDF document to outline potential opportunities for the VTA Block and identify key elements that will produce world-class TOD. The DDF document provides guidance for a variety of design approaches and offers criteria by which these design approaches can be evaluated for the most successful outcomes. This document is the result of design exercises and conversations which ran in parallel with BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension Project (BSV Phase II Project) processes, and DDF content has been shared with the public at BSV Phase II Project Community Working Group (CWG) meetings and other forums for feedback. VTA engaged key stakeholders, including the City of San José, adjacent property owners, the Downtown Business Association, the Downtown Residents Association, and others during this process to gather their input and feedback on the proposed framework.

The key goals of the DDF document are:

- To provide a framework for developers to create world-class TOD to optimize the balance between development opportunities and the creation of high-quality public spaces.
- To align with VTA's goals of promoting public transit and bicycle use and pedestrian activity.
- To generate revenue for VTA to support ridership and VTA services through the highest and best use of property owned by VTA.
- To outline key decisions and opportunities for future developers regarding critical issues such as parking, site access, shared amenities, and overall program structure for the future development.
- To identify the key design constraints related to building adjacent to (or over the top of) the future BART station, including structural requirements, egress requirements, services, bicycle storage, and other items that will need to be coordinated and integrated with future TOD on the site.
- To explore how VTA and future development partners can engage in public-private partnerships to create successful TOD.
- To provide a tool that allows VTA, members of the public, interested stakeholders, City representatives, and others to understand the approach to creation of world-class TOD, and how to evaluate development plans and design proposals as they are presented.

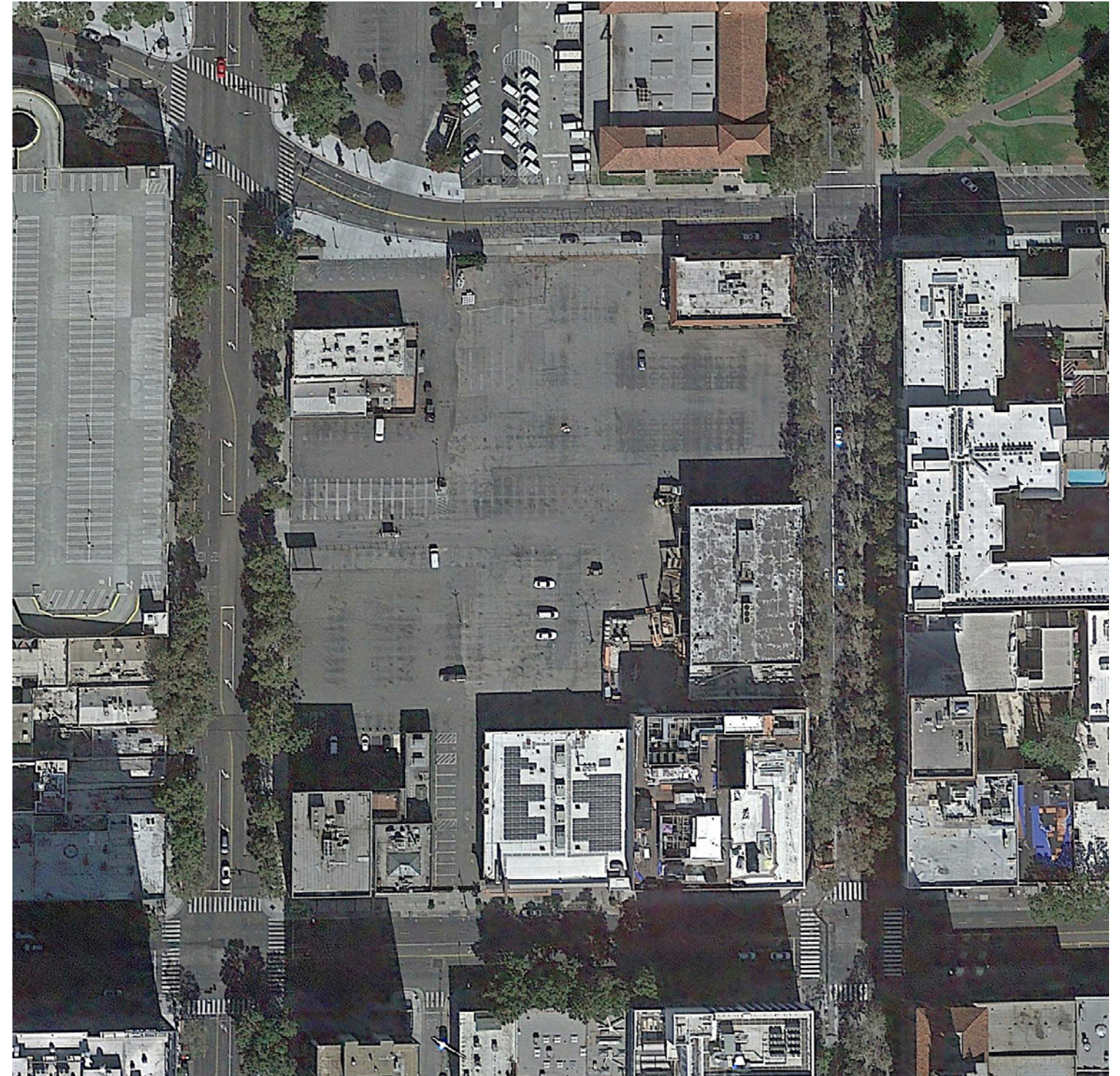


Fig. 1-01 Existing Site View



Fig. 1-02 Artistic Impression of BART Plaza

1 Executive Summary

In addition to providing a framework for future developers, this document provides historical context, key elements for successful outcomes, sustainability goals, massing studies, and potential approaches to the challenges on the site, such as parking and phasing of future construction.

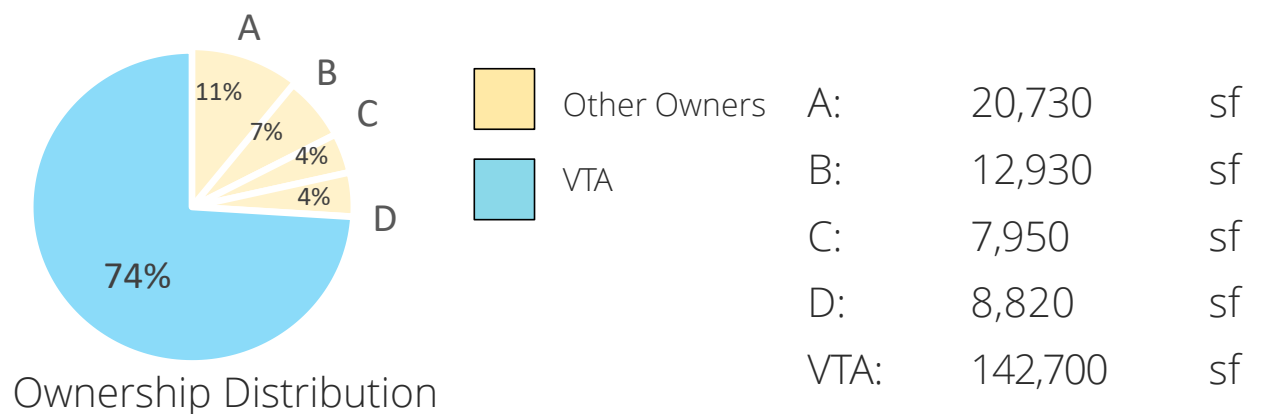
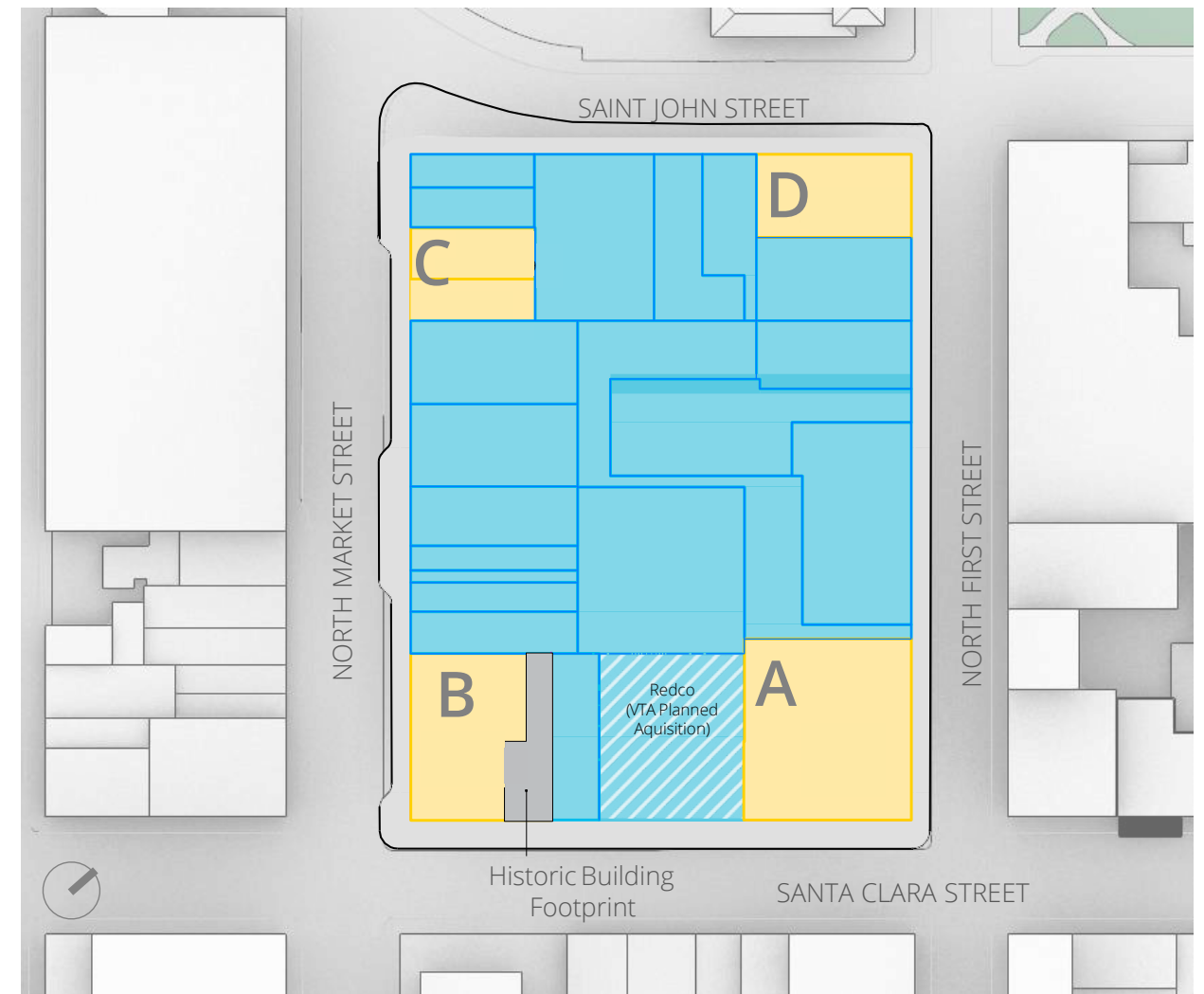
Integrating mixed-use development with public transit, including development above transit stations, has been accomplished all over the US and globally. The benefits of this approach are well established, including reduction in vehicular traffic, and a more pedestrian friendly, mixed-use urban environments. World-class TOD can be evaluated by what it gives back to the community, and how it enhances the station area, as well as the revenue it generates to support transit use overall.

1.2 Value is Greater than the Sum of Parts

Why has VTA gone through the exercise of creating a Design Development Framework? How does this further advance the goals already set out in VTA's TOD Policy?

The DDF specifically addresses the unique challenges and opportunities of the VTA Block, where VTA is the majority owner of the city block in Downtown which will house the new BART station. However, there are multiple property owners on the block, and if all parties went about developing their land independently and in isolation, without a coherent vision or shared interests, the ultimate result would likely be a disjointed development with redundant elements and less than optimal shared benefits for the community. It would also result in less buildable area and a less diverse development program. In short, it would be a missed opportunity for everyone.

By thinking about the VTA Block as a whole, the principal concept of the DDF is to develop shared visions and aspirations for the block which work to the benefit of all property owners and the overall community in order to provide enhanced value to all parties compared to outcomes associated with uncoordinated approaches. Of course, the mechanisms for accomplishing this vision will require significant work beyond the scope of the DDF, and if parties can work toward a collective framework for future TOD on the block, the value of the block will indeed be greater than the sum of its individual parts.



Ownership Distribution

Fig. 1-03 Site Ownership Diagram



Fig. 1-04 Artistic Impression of Public Rooftop Amenity Space

1 Executive Summary

1.3 Design Guidelines

The heart of the DDF is a series of Design Guidelines, which help define what successful development means on the VTA Block. These guidelines are not intended to be rigid requirements, but rather to establish priorities and criteria for evaluation of different proposed design concepts. While the document goes into more detail on each topic, below is a summary of the key design guidelines that form the core of the DDF:

Public Realm Activation

At the heart of the VTA block will be a publicly accessible plaza which is easily accessed directly and from all directions. The critical aspect for the success of the project is that both the plaza and the various street frontages are active and vibrant at all times of day. The new BART station will bring thousands of people to and from the site each day, which will strongly contribute to an active public realm. The mix of uses will also contribute to office workers, residents, and guests utilizing the public spaces at different times of day. The DDF proposes having a broad mix of retail, food, beverage, and other active functions at street level that are sized appropriately to support local businesses, including an event performance space at the northern end of the plaza. Public art can also create a unique sense of place and community within the plaza. With a combination of these strategies and components, the VTA Block will create a new gathering place and focal point of the community.

Improve Access and Connectivity

The plaza is connected to adjacent streets via a series of 'paseos,' which are pedestrian-only walkways that also subdivide the VTA Block into a series of distinct parcels. These paseos follow a historic urban pattern in Downtown to break up large city blocks to create a more walkable environment. The paseos also allow for active frontages on multiple sides of the buildings.

Urban Character and Public Interfaces

Along Santa Clara Street and other key corridors in Downtown, there is a historic pattern of a consistent 'podium' of 40 to 60 foot high buildings. While some recent developments have created gaps and provided setbacks along the street frontage, the City of San José's design guidelines and the DDF both incorporate the idea that respecting and reinforcing this historic podium improves the overall urban fabric and provides a consistent architectural expression while still allowing for design flexibility.

It is important to maintain flexibility for design of individual buildings in order to allow for variety and creative expression, and there are significant benefits to the DDF giving some guidance regarding material selection that provides consistency and ensures high quality and durable materials are used. It is also important to align material choices with the sustainability goals of the project, and materials that are locally sourced have lower amounts of embodied carbon. In addition, the DDF identifies and distinguishes more solid materials for the podium bases of the buildings (such as stone or concrete) from the towers above, which can have lighter and more open façades. This guidance helps integrate the project with its historic urban frontage context, particularly along Santa Clara Street, while still allowing for design flexibility and variation along the different streets and buildings.

Historic Sensitivity

As part of careful evaluation of the historical context of the site, there are two key historical factors considered in the DDF: the historic Building and Loan structure and the St James Park historic district.

The historic Building and Loan structure at 81 West Santa Clara Street dates back to 1926. The DDF assumes no development on this parcel, and describes the implications

for the future of the block if this site remains in its current state.

The DDF also notes that the northwest corner of the site lies within the St James Park historic district, which will require further discussion and coordination with the City of San José to determine how this might impact the development of the proposed building on that parcel.

Social Equity and Environmental Responsibility

The DDF is aligned with VTA's TOD Policy in advocating for more housing units to be built close to public transit, at a range of densities and affordability levels. This is complemented by a range of guidelines which enhance the publicly accessible spaces at ground level, including the plaza with public art and a community center to host events and performances.

Environmental responsibility guidelines include a target of net-zero energy, and encouragement of a holistic approach to sustainability, including low carbon materials, centralized utilities and improved mobility and accessibility.

1 Executive Summary

Public Realm Activation



Fig. 1-05

Urban Character and Public Interfaces



Fig. 1-06

Social Equity and Environmental Responsibility



Fig. 1-07

Improve Access and Connectivity



Fig. 1-08

Historical Sensitivity



Fig. 1-09

Contribution to Downtown's Skyline



Fig. 1-10

1 Executive Summary

1.4 Applying the Design Guidelines

The DDF also explores multiple massing configurations and creates a series of parameters by which development options could be evaluated for their adherence to the design guidelines. Among the parameters that are utilized to evaluate different options are:

- Comfort in the outdoor environment of the plaza, including access to daylight, shaded space, and protection from wind
- Access to views, both of St James Park and the mountains beyond
- Resource management, including embodied carbon and benefits of construction phasing
- Spatial and urban performance metrics, including floor area ratio (FAR), optimizing outdoor amenity space (e.g., rooftops and terraces), and compatibility with adjacent space and development

1.5 Sustainable Approach to Development

This section discusses the DDF's sustainability goals, including net-zero energy. It includes options to design, build, operate, and maintain the block to be more sustainable, with focuses on materials, health, wellness, technology, and water, mobility, and energy management.

1.6 Flexible Approach to Parking

Parking is one of the key areas where all property owners can benefit by working together on a shared strategy. Given how rapidly demand for parking is shifting, the DDF provides a framework that embraces options rather than proposing one fixed parking solution. The parking options provided by the DDF take into account parking provided in the area as a whole, understands that the future BART station will also change demand for parking, and follows trends that are in-line with parking provided by other recent developments in the area. The DDF also assesses what could be provided in terms of parking on site without compromising the public plaza and other urban character components. The concepts envisioned in the DDF are within ranges currently being explored by other proximate developments. Parking provided could also be repurposed for other uses later.

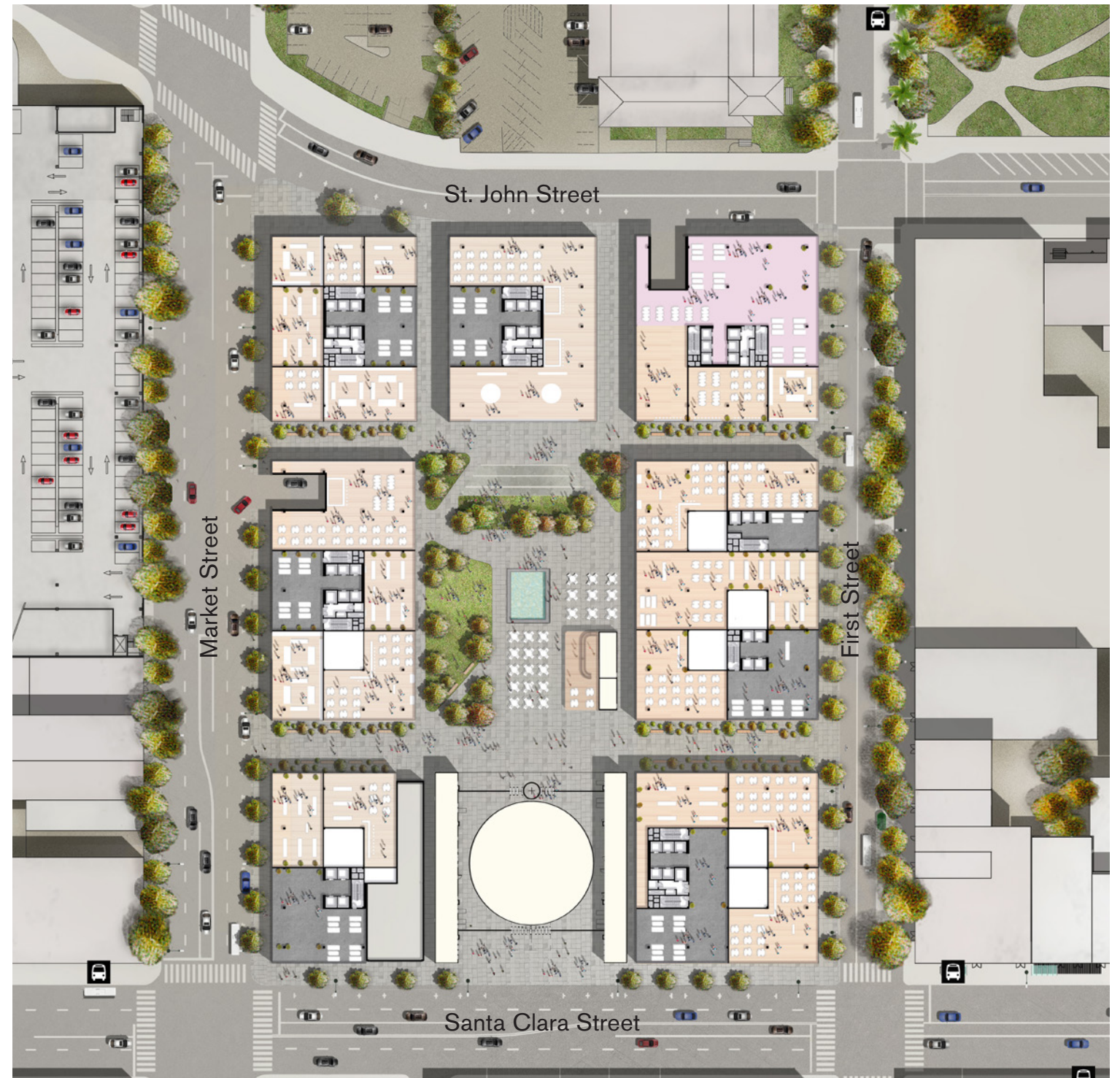


Fig. 1-11 Proposed Site Plan Ground Floor (Not shown : TOD Above BART Station)

1 Executive Summary

1.7 Coordination with Future Station

The DDF team worked closely with the BSV Phase II Project team to coordinate future BART station requirements with future TOD on the VTA block. The depth of the basement level below the plaza has been sized to allow for planting and landscaping on the plaza above. There are some back-of-house components that need to surface at the plaza level, and it is proposed that those elements be integrated into a pavilion building in the plaza, which would also house a café or restaurant to further activate the plaza and station area.

1.8 Looking Forward

The DDF provides a framework for development of the VTA Block, and it is intended to provide flexibility. VTA intends to use the DDF to inform future work with developers, and as with any other development in Downtown, as the local land use jurisdiction, the City of San José would be responsible for processing applications to develop the VTA Block and ensuring that the community is appropriately engaged in the process. This document lays the foundation for successful, world-class TOD on the VTA Block that helps maximize the benefits associated with the BSV Phase II Project. By working together to establish and achieve shared visions, we can transform Downtown for the benefit of generations to come.

DDF Contents

- Chapter 2 – Historical Context
- Chapter 3 – Design Guidelines
- Chapter 4 – Applying the Design Guidelines
- Chapter 5 – Sustainable Approach to Development
- Chapter 6 – A Flexible Approach to Parking
- Chapter 7 – Integration of Station Design with TOD
- Chapter 8 – Looking Forward



Fig. 1-12 Artistic Impression of Future TOD on VTA Block from Santa Clara Street

