

Agency and Community Participation



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6.1

INTRODUCTION



Since certification of the FEIR in December 2004, VTA has continued its public outreach efforts. Public input is integral to the success of the Project, and the Project team continues to implement various communication methods, including public meetings, to disseminate information to the community and receive public input on Project changes.

The Project web site (www.vtabart-vta.org) provides the public with the most up-to-date information about the Project, including the Project schedule and

the latest Project changes. The site provides the opportunity for the public to submit comments to the Project team. Interested parties can also request to be added to the Project database to receive future Project information. In addition, a variety of public and stakeholder meetings have been held to inform the public of the project changes and to receive public feedback.



6.2

PROJECT OUTREACH MEETINGS

Over 45 public outreach meetings have been held since certification of the FEIR in December 2004, as listed and described below.

- ❑ 23 VTA-City Partnership Meetings
- ❑ Six External Technical Advisory Committee (ETAC) Meetings
- ❑ Six Community Working Group (CWG) Meetings
- ❑ Two public open houses on preliminary engineering and value analysis
- ❑ Three public meetings on project changes
- ❑ One station area planning workshop
- ❑ Four CWG scoping meetings
- ❑ Four public scoping meetings

Table 6.2-1 presents a complete list of the meetings and dates. See Chapter 9 of the FEIR for a description and list of members of the various groups.

6.2.1 VTA-CITY PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

Formerly called Project Development Team (PDT) meetings, in summer 2006, these meetings were renamed and reorganized to become the VTA-City

Partnership Meetings to focus on local issues specific to each city within the BART Extension Project. Meeting participants include key city staff and key VTA representatives from the Environmental, Planning, Public Affairs, and Engineering departments. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure ongoing communication and coordination during the Preliminary Engineering design phase, with VTA and the cities within the Project.

6.2.2 EXTERNAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

These quarterly meetings update the cities within the Project and agency stakeholders on the progress of the Project and seek input to further advance the Project. ETAC meetings are designed to coordinate Project implementation from a regional perspective.

6.2.3 COMMUNITY WORKING GROUPS

The purpose of the CWGs is to provide Project information to key members of the community and to facilitate community input and participation. CWGs

were established for the City of Milpitas, the San Jose Hostetter-Alum Rock neighborhood, Downtown San Jose, and the City of Santa Clara. The CWGs include representatives such as leaders of neighborhood and business associations, community organizations, advocacy groups, and planning commissioners.

6.2.4 PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public open houses, meetings, and workshops are conducted at key milestones to introduce the public to the Project, and to update the public on specific design elements and changes. A variety of public outreach meetings have been held to keep the community informed since certification of the FEIR.

In February 2005, two public open houses were held to provide updates on the BART Extension Project, including the VTA Board of Supervisors' certification of the FEIR, status of the environmental process, preliminary engineering activities, and Project schedule.

Between March and May 2005, public meetings were held that focused on specific design changes, including those relating to the Dixon Landing Road alignment, Downtown San Jose station consolidation, and Capitol/Montague aerial alignment.

In August 2006, the first Santa Clara Station Visioning Workshop was conducted for community members to brainstorm about the future of the Santa Clara Station and area, and to identify key issues, opportunities, and challenges facing the planning area.

At all public meetings, Project staff and team members were available to discuss the Project and answer questions. Written comments were also accepted at all public meetings.

6.2.5 SCOPING MEETINGS FOR THE DRAFT SEIR

6.2.5.1 Notification

On July 21, 2006, VTA distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to advise interested agencies and the public that a Draft SEIR will be prepared and that four public scoping meetings would be held in

August 2006. VTA distributed the NOP to a list of 124 agencies, elected officials, and interested parties in the study area.

VTA also notified potentially interested organizations and individuals about the Draft SEIR and the schedule of public scoping meetings. The public meetings were announced through a public notice mailer, display advertisements, a media release, and posting on the VTA web site. The public notice mailer was produced in four languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese) and was mailed to approximately 30,400 interested organizations, businesses, and residents. The display advertisements ran in the following periodicals: San Jose Mercury News published on July 27, 2006 and August 11, 2006; The Milpitas Post published on July 27, 2006; El Observador published on August 4, 2006; Thoi Boa published on August 4, 2006; Santa Clara Weekly published on August 2, 16, and 23, 2006; and Rose Garden Resident published on August 17 and 24, 2006. The media release was distributed electronically to approximately 45 news sources.

6.2.5.2 Public Scoping Meetings

As part of the CEQA process and Project outreach effort, VTA conducted four public scoping meetings in August 2006, as listed below.

- Tuesday, August 8, 2006 – Milpitas Community Center, Main Auditorium, 457 East Calaveras Boulevard, Milpitas, California
- Monday, August 14, 2006 – City of Santa Clara Police Department, Community Meeting Room, 601 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, California
- Tuesday, August 15, 2006 – Portuguese Community Center, Meeting Room, 1115 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, California
- Monday, August 21, 2006 – City of San Jose City Hall, Committee Meeting Rooms W-118, 119, 200 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, California

Each meeting included a PowerPoint presentation outlining the Project design changes, followed by a formal public comment period for interested parties to provide input on study areas to evaluate in the Draft SEIR.

At the meetings, verbal comments were transcribed by a court reporter, and written comments were submitted for VTA's consideration. In total, approximately 84 people attended the meetings, and 30 speaker cards and 9 comment cards were collected. Interested parties were also given the opportunity to submit written comments via email or mail during the formal comment period from July 21, 2006 to September 7, 2006. Thirty-five written comment letters and emails were received from agencies, stakeholders, interested groups, and the public. The comments addressed a range of issues, including environmental impacts, station and alignment options, and Project alternate design preferences.

6.2.5.3 Community Working Group Meetings on Project Changes

The CWG scoping meetings were held immediately before each of the four public scoping meetings in August 2006. The CWG meetings provided an informal introduction to scoping, and included a Power-Point presentation followed by a discussion of issues particularly relevant to the geographic location of the CWG. CWG members were informed that they could submit formal scoping comments for the record by speaking at the public scoping meetings or submitting written comments to VTA via mail or email.

6.2.5.4 Scoping Report

A Scoping Report was prepared to provide a thorough overview of the scoping meetings and to summarize all comments received during the formal public comment period. To learn more about the scoping meetings, public notification, and key issues raised, and to view project materials provided at the meetings, please review the scoping report on the project web site at www.vtabart-vta.org. To request a hard copy of the Scoping Report, call (408) 321-5789 (or TDD (408) 321-2330).

6.2.6 ONGOING PUBLIC OUTREACH

When the Draft SEIR is published, another round of public outreach/involvement will begin, including the notification of interested parties about the document's availability and public hearings to solicit input on the Draft SEIR. Interested parties will have the opportunity to provide verbal and written comments on the Draft SEIR. Responses to the comments received will be included in the Final SEIR.

As appropriate, the Project team will continue to develop outreach materials and conduct meetings to inform the public of Project changes and updates, and to receive feedback on Project developments.

TABLE 6.2-1:

Public Outreach Meetings	
DATE	MEETING
1/11/2005	ETAC Meeting
1/31/2005	Milpitas CWG Meeting (Project Update)
2/2/2005	San Jose Open House (Project Update)
2/2/2005	Downtown San Jose CWG Meeting (Project Update)
2/7/2005	Santa Clara CWG Meeting (Project Update)
2/10/2005	Hostetter/Alum Rock Open House (Project Update)
2/10/2005	Hostetter/Alum Rock CWG Meeting (Project Update)
3/16/2005	Dixon Landing Road Alignment Community Meeting
4/20/2005	Downtown San Jose CWG Meeting - Station Consolidation
4/20/2005	Downtown San Jose Station Consolidation Community Meeting
4/21/2005	PDT Meeting – Milpitas
4/21/2005	PDT Meeting - San Jose
4/21/2005	PDT Meeting - Santa Clara
4/25/2005	Milpitas CWG Meeting: Montague/Capitol Aerial Alignment
4/25/2005	Milpitas Community Meeting: Capitol/Montague Aerial Alignment
7/21/2005	PDT Meeting – Milpitas
7/21/2005	PDT Meeting - San Jose
7/21/2005	PDT Meeting - Santa Clara
10/11/2005	ETAC Meeting
10/20/2005	PDT Meeting – Milpitas
10/20/2005	PDT Meeting - San Jose
10/20/2005	PDT Meeting - Santa Clara
1/19/2006	PDT Meeting: VTA, Milpitas, Fremont
1/19/2006	PDT Meeting: VTA/Santa Clara
1/19/2006	PDT Meeting: VTA/San Jose
4/11/2006	ETAC Meeting
4/20/2006	PDT Meeting: VTA, Milpitas/Fremont
4/20/2006	PDT Meeting: VTA/City of Santa Clara
4/20/2006	PDT Meeting: VTA/City of Santa Clara
7/10/2006	VTA/City Partnership Meeting: City of Santa Clara
7/11/2006	ETAC Meeting
7/20/2006	VTA/City Partnership Meeting: Fremont & Milpitas
7/20/2006	VTA/City Partnership Meeting: City of Santa Clara
7/20/2006	VTA/City Partnership Meeting: City of San Jose, Part I
7/27/2006	VTA/City Partnership Meeting: City of San Jose, Part II

DATE	MEETING
8/8/2006	ETAC Meeting
8/8/2006	Public Scoping Meeting on Draft SEIR
8/8/2006	CWG Scoping Meeting on Draft SEIR
8/14/2006	Public Scoping Meeting on Draft SEIR
8/14/2006	CWG Scoping Meeting on Draft SEIR
8/15/2006	Public Scoping Meeting on Draft SEIR
8/15/2006	CWG Scoping Meeting on Draft SEIR
8/21/2006	Public Scoping Meeting on Draft SEIR
8/21/2006	CWG Scoping Meeting on Draft SEIR
8/28/2006	Visioning Workshop for the Santa Clara Station Area Plan
9/21/2006	VTA/City Partnership Meeting - Fremont/Milpitas
9/21/2006	VTA/City Partnership Meeting - San Jose, Part I
10/5/2006	VTA/City Partnership Meeting - San Jose, Part II
10/10/2006	ETAC/PDT Meeting

Source: VTA Community Outreach 2006.