



# Memorandum

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Mayor Sam Liccardo  
Councilmember Sergio Jimenez  
Councilmember Raul Peralez  
Councilmember Dev Davis  
Councilmember Maya Esparza

**SUBJECT:** Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan  
Rail Alignment

**DATE:** January 31, 2020

Approved by:

Date: 01/31/2020

**RECOMMENDATION**

Accept staff recommendation for Decision #3: Existing Track Approaches into the Future Station with the following additions to direct the City Manager to:

1. Prioritize and integrate the highest quality and community enhancing mitigations into the Diridon Integrated Station Concept and related projects, especially around the Greater Gardner and North Willow Glen Neighborhoods (including Fuller Park). Refer to previous council direction from the following August 16, 2019 council memo recommendations:
  - a. Caltrain Business Plan, Recommendation #4<sup>1</sup>
  - b. California High Speed Rail Update, Recommendation #2 (a-c)<sup>2</sup>
2. Work with the partner agencies to create a committee of local neighborhood representatives to monitor and provide ongoing feedback for the duration of all projects and potentially post-project completion. Refer to the Caltrain Central Equipment & Maintenance Facility (CEMOF) Committee, California High Speed Rail (CAHSR) community working group, and Diridon Good Neighbor Committee as examples.
3. Reinforce to all partner agencies the commitment set forth in August 2019 that, as individual projects move forward through environmental processes, project sponsors like HSR remain engaged in the DISC process and the subsequent Rail Corridor Plan work. The commitment must include efforts to identify funding and make necessary changes during HSR environmental and design processes to accommodate the station plan and grade separations. (August 16, 2019 - California High Speed Rail Update, Recommendation #3)

<sup>1</sup> <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7598352&GUID=021B168A-7CC7-4240-BB56-9B9C61B3E399>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7598352&GUID=021B168A-7CC7-4240-BB56-9B9C61B3E399>

**BACKGROUND**

For the past several years, the future of the rail alignment south of Diridon Station has taken center stage. In response to residents’ concerns about noise, roadway constraints, and visual impacts, the City developed its own “City-Generated Option” based on California High Speed Rail’s data and an independent consultant, incorporating a mix of at-grade, viaduct, and underground tunnel sections south of Diridon Station. We advanced this analytical work through the commission of an interagency Diridon Integrated Station Concept (DISC) plan. In February 2019, during an update on the DISC, the City Council directed staff to work with the consultants and partner agencies to ensure all options were thoroughly studied for this alignment including both the existing corridor and a viaduct along Highway 280/87<sup>3</sup>.

In December 2019, when the DISC team brought forth their recommendations, the City Council approved two of three of the recommendations, the remainder being the recommendation to maintain the project in the existing rail corridor. Through the urging of Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers Peralez and Davis, the City Council directed staff to agendize a public study session on January 28 with additional data points and analysis -- with a decision to follow.<sup>4</sup>

Collectively, the agencies have engaged in exhaustive efforts to conduct community outreach, gather data, and analyze options to present the best information for Council’s decision. We thank the DISC team for being responsive to the Council’s and community’s numerous requests for additional information throughout this process.

**DISCUSSION**

The extensive process described above illustrates the importance of the decision before us. We are essentially poised to approve a “One-Hundred Year Project,” but one that will not begin construction for several years. As revealed in the study, while moving all rail operations on to a viaduct is theoretically ideal, it is simply not feasible given that diesel-power operators would be forced to remain in the existing corridor. This would consequently sandwich the Gardner neighborhood between two rail corridors, and detrimentally impact the underserved Guadalupe-Washington and Tamien neighborhoods. Opting for a viaduct option would also divert already-limited resources from quality future mitigations in the existing corridor, such as sound walls.

When weighing the options’ varying impacts on all of our neighborhoods, we cannot escape the conclusion that maintaining the project in the existing corridor is less impactful than the I-280 rail viaduct option. The chart provided by staff, below, succinctly summarizes many of the trade-offs between the options:

Summary of Benefits and Trade-Offs Existing Rail Alignment Vs. the Addition of the I-280 Rail Viaduct		
Points of Comparison	Elevated Station/Existing Rail Alignment in 2040	Elevated Station/Existing Rail Alignment Plus I-280 Rail Viaduct Addition in 2040
Train Volumes	Overall Increase	Overall Increase
Neighborhoods Affected	Same as Today	Same as Today Plus Additional Neighborhoods
Infrastructure Footprint	Modest Increase	Significantly More
Noise and Vibration	Modest Increase	May Affect Larger Geography/Population
Visual	Modest	Significant Change to Visual Landscape
Environmental	Some	Significantly More (Incl. Guadalupe River)
Maintenance	Modest	High
Flyover Required	No	Yes
Cost	Base Cost Option*	~2X Base Cost*
Property	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

\*Options with Elevated Station



<sup>3</sup> <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7017715&GUID=931B2C20-AC53-4EF1-9119-E4E01FC8E514>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7927583&GUID=2EDAF2E1-FF99-4D06-9A4F-89B989F492AE>



Remaining in the existing corridor also requires that corridor to be fully modernized and allows for that investment. By concurring with the DISC team's recommendation, we will continue to demand and expect that our partner agencies will work with us to plan, design and implement the best set of project features, mitigations, and betterments for impacted neighborhoods. This includes ensuring that conditions relating to safety, noise, vibration, air quality, and aesthetics in surrounding neighborhoods – Gregory, Gardner, North Willow Glen, and beyond – improve, or at least remain as good as today. Project commitments should include quantifiable, verifiable improvements in noise, vibration, and emissions, and should include aesthetic and qualitative improvements such as trees, "green" sound walls, and making Fuller Park permanent. This commitment must also include pursuing grade separations at key locations in San Jose.

Furthermore, the collaboration between the public agencies and our community must not stop here; it must continue throughout the span of project EIRs, design and build, construction, and through passenger service. These "long-view" projects will take time and resources. Ongoing engagement with the community is critical to keep trust, and to ensure that the project features and mitigations meet Council direction and community expectations. An example would be BART and CAHSR's community working groups, which consist of leaders from the affected neighborhoods and local community groups. Future engagement should emphasize our diverse multilingual communities.

Finally, while this item focuses on the Diridon Area and track approaches to the station, the same principles should apply to the way in which new rail infrastructure is designed and implemented along Monterey Corridor, particularly at Branham, Skyway, and Chynoweth.

### **CONCLUSION**

We would like to thank all of the community members who have worked tirelessly to advocate for their neighborhood throughout this process. We hope that the community will continue to work with the City and partner agencies moving forward to facilitate a world-class Diridon Station and integrated rail systems that prioritize the protection, preservation, and enhancement of our neighborhoods.