



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: John Ristow

**SUBJECT: DIRIDON INTEGRATED
STATION CONCEPT PLAN –
RAIL ALIGNMENT**

DATE: January 29, 2020

Approved

D. D. S. L.

Date

1/30/2020

SUPPLEMENTAL

REASON FOR SUPPLEMENTAL

To clarify and summarize background and staff recommendations associated with the rail alignment options for an expanded and redesigned San José Diridon Station (Diridon Station).

RECOMMENDATION

Accept staff recommendation regarding the Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan Decision #3, to maintain and improve track approaches in the existing northern and southern corridors, and commit to work to develop a design for the southern rail corridor that results in noise, vibration, and visual conditions that are no worse and ideally better than today, even with higher future train volumes.

BACKGROUND

When BART, commuter rail, high-speed rail, light rail, and supporting bus services converge, Diridon Station will support more high-capacity transit connections than any other place in the Bay Area. In order to plan for the substantial growth of Diridon Station, the City of San José, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB), Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), and the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) (the “Partner Agencies”) formed a public agency partnership via a Cooperative Agreement in July 2018.

The Partner Agencies have been working together with a consultant team led by Arcadis Design & Consultancy and Benthem Crouwel Architects (“Team ABC”) since September 2018 to develop a spatial vision for a new and expanded station. The Layout Development Report

completed by the Partner Agencies and Team ABC is included in the December 3, 2019 agenda packet to the City Council.

After considerable evaluation and interaction with the community, Team ABC and the Partner Agencies developed a fourth spatial layout (the “Concept Layout”) that optimizes transit and passenger needs, while supporting future development potential and balancing city and neighborhood impacts. The project staff of the four Partner Agencies jointly authored a memo that put forward three decisions related to the Concept Layout for consideration by the Mayor and City Council. This included the following:

- **Decision #1: Elevated Station Platforms.** Elevating the tracks and platforms will allow for street-level east/west connections through the station area, knit together neighborhoods on either side of the tracks, and facilitate connections for people walking, bicycling, and driving.
- **Decision #2: Station Entrances at Santa Clara Street and San Fernando Street.** The Partner Agencies recommend two main concourses with four station entrances. One concourse is oriented toward Santa Clara Street and will be close to BART, light rail, bus, and other connecting modes to allow for quick transfers. The other concourse will be located near San Fernando Street and allow for easy connections to the bike network, creeks, existing neighborhoods, and future office and housing development.
- **Decision #3: Existing Track Approaches into the Future Station.** The Partner Agencies recommend maintaining track approaches that generally stay within the existing northern and southern corridors in order to leverage existing rail infrastructure, minimize overall community impact, and minimize the need to acquire significant land.

Previous Action and Direction

The San José City Council and Caltrain Board of Directors (JPB) accepted the first two staff-recommended decisions in December 2019. The San José City Council deferred weighing in on Decision #3 and requested a study session to gather additional information and analysis about the possible track approaches into the future station. That study session was held on January 28, 2020.

The VTA Board of Directors received the plan update as an information item on their Consent Agenda, and CHSRA Board of Directors elected to defer making decisions on all three items until after City Council consideration.

ANALYSIS

The City Council materials from December 3, 2019, including the November 15, 2019 Partner Agency Report and Layout Development Report by Team ABC, include significant analysis

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about the three recommendations. In response to City Council direction on December 3, 2019, additional information regarding Decision #3 was completed for the January 28, 2020 study session.

Additional project background is available at the project website: www.diridonsj.org/disc.

CONCLUSION

The Partner Agencies believe that the Concept Layout with the three decisions detailed above offers the most promise to meet the objectives of the Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan and should be advanced to the next stage of project development, analysis, and definition.

Specifically regarding Decision 3, the Partner Agencies determined that the I-280/SR-87 viaduct option would expand visual and noise impacts over a larger area; pose considerable construction, environmental, regulatory, and maintenance challenges; require more infrastructure and property; more significantly impede potential transit oriented development; and cost significantly more than remaining within and improving the existing corridor. Moreover, if Caltrain and High Speed Rail utilized the viaduct, much of the existing and future additional rail service would remain in the existing corridor, with fewer resources to address or mitigate challenges.

The Partner Agencies recommend pursuing improvements to the existing southern corridor designed to address concerns relating to safety, noise, vibration, and visual impacts, among others, in deep collaboration with surrounding communities.

/s/

JOHN RISTOW

Director of Transportation

For questions, please contact Eric Eidlin, DOT Station Planning Manager, at (408) 795-1638.