



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Sam Liccardo
Councilmember Raul Perez
Councilmember Lan Diep
Councilmember Dev Davis
Councilmember Johnny Khamis

SUBJECT: BART PHASE II

DATE: September 15, 2017

Approved

Date

9/15/2017

RECOMMENDATION

Accept staff recommendations for City priorities and locally preferred alternatives including strong support for the single bore tunneling method for the BART Phase II Project with additional direction to request the following of the VTA Board:

1. Request that VTA and the City work with San José State University (SJSU) to consider project elements and requests that include, but are not limited to: street signage and wayfinding, interim transit programs for impacted riders during construction, and a plan for pedestrian safety with respect to increased truck traffic due to construction.
2. Consider a station entrance at the corner of 3rd and Santa Clara Street for the Downtown Station – as identified and described in the staff report – under the west station location and single bore tunneling method.
3. Request that VTA in coordination with City staff present their Construction Outreach and Management Plan (COMP) to the City Council for review and adoption.
4. Further request that City staff report back to Council in early 2018 with an update on:
 - a. Interagency discussions related to future planning of Diridon San José Central Station.
 - b. VTA and the City's discussions with BART on the locally preferred alternatives. This should happen as soon as information is available.
 - c. A strategy on the City's preparation for future construction coordination.
 - d. The BART Station Security Plan with City staff review and input prior to any VTA action on an agreement between VTA and BART.

BACKGROUND

We support the staff recommendations of single bore tunnel technology and the preferred station options.

Preference on Single Bore Tunneling

The history of transit systems being built along major arterial streets in downtown has proven that major construction on street surfaces should be avoided as best as possible. In 1986, the construction of the light rail system through the Downtown Core on First and Second streets caused severe and historic impacts to the community. Those impacts included major loss of business revenue and, sadly, even the shuttering of businesses.

More recently, we saw the agonizing effects on businesses along Alum Rock and East Santa Clara Street during the construction of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. The twin-bore tunneling option would create a more severe impact since it requires “cut and cover” construction along Santa Clara Street in the heart of the Downtown Core. Simply put, this would cause significant and widespread disruption at the surface level during construction. Given our experience on construction impacts in the Downtown, we absolutely must advocate for the least intrusive technology available.

Single bore construction has been proven feasible and safe by VTA’s independent analysis¹, *does not* require “cut-and-cover” on the public right-of-way, and potentially allows for a shorter construction schedule. We echo not only staff recommendations, but the strong response from our community, that it is in the best interest of Downtown San José to use single-bore tunneling technology.

Outreach & Construction

The preferred west option for Downtown San José and north option for Diridon San José Central Station reinforces our plans for a significant amount of future employment, housing, and visitor growth.

While the completion of BART Phase II will be a celebratory moment when trains pull into downtown, we must ensure that the process to that moment is inclusive, smooth and met with as little impact as possible to our residents and business community. We expect that a world-class transit system should be accompanied with world-class construction management; and, as elected representatives of those who will be enduring the construction for years to come, we intend to work closely with VTA to maintain that expectation.

Furthermore, while the discussion of station branding is still far off into the future, we expect outreach should be conducted at the appropriate time since there are communities such as the Little Portugal/Roosevelt community already leading their own conversations.

¹ VTA; BART Silicon Valley, Phase II Single Bore Tunnel Technical Studies; April 10, 2017

We also cannot ignore that we are in the middle of an exciting economic cycle in which our limited City staff resources are trying to keep up with. For example, our Department of Public Works currently has one staff member coordinating all the downtown construction activities including road closures, event impacts and construction schedule. With the number of high density developments in the pipeline and BART construction on the horizon, it would be beneficial for us to ensure that we are thoroughly prepared for a level of construction volume that downtown has never seen.

Ongoing Discussions

With no San José presence on the current BART board, it would be prudent to continue engaging with BART on our priorities and preferences. We hope that continuous conversations will bring consensus and understanding between our City and the greater regional system.

Following a study trip this past summer on transit station planning in Europe, we are encouraged to see our staff, agency and community partners energized about the future of Diridon Station. We agree that it is urgent for our City and partners to be coordinated on an iconic and sustainable vision for Diridon that allows for a high-caliber user experience. With the current development interests and planned infrastructure investment at Diridon, we must capitalize on this momentum as best we can.

CONCLUSION

After multiple ballot measures spearheaded by the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, and approval by voters, persistent advocacy to secure funding by our local, state and federal delegation, and countless hours of VTA and city staff time, the train is closer to pulling into the station. It has been the City's longtime vision to bring BART into the heart of San José, and as we prepare to make these recommendations to the VTA board, we are cognizant of the work, time and effort placed into this endeavor by our staff, community members, partners, and predecessors. We are confident that our City's first underground transit system will bring positive change to Downtown and that public rail transit in the Bay Area will come full circle here in San José.

BROWN ACT: The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.