

# Memorandum

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

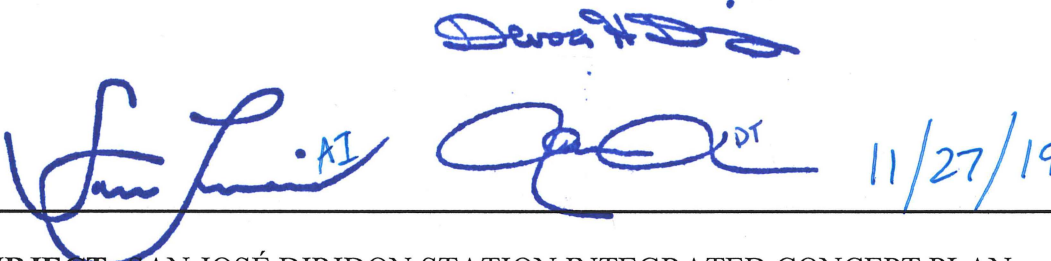
**FROM:** Mayor Sam Liccardo  
Councilmember Raul Peralez  
Councilmember Dev Davis

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** November 27, 2019

Approved

Date



**SUBJECT:** SAN JOSÉ DIRIDON STATION INTEGRATED CONCEPT PLAN

## RECOMMENDATION

1. Support Staff recommendations regarding two of the three primary decisions, namely:
  - a. Elevated station platforms and tracks at the station, and
  - b. Locating two station entrances in the north near Santa Clara Street and in the south near San Fernando Street.
2. Defer consideration of a final decision on the track approaches in the Northern and Southern Corridor until a date in early 2020 when there is a full community—and Council—understanding of the tradeoffs that have been evaluated in the I-280/SR-87 viaduct and existing rail corridor scenarios.
3. Request that the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB), the High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA), and the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) (together, with the City of San José, “Partner Agencies”) defer a final decision on the DISC Plan until the City of San José has endorsed a track alignment.
4. Schedule an evening study session – or evening Council meeting – in early January 2020 to ensure a full public vetting and understanding of the tradeoffs of the DISC decision as it relates to the use of the existing Southern Corridor versus the addition of an I-280/SR-87 viaduct. The public hearing should provide additional relevant information that effectively addresses the following questions, within the context of the broader DISC process, including other concerns raised in community meetings, and at the Diridon Joint Policy Advisory Board:
  - a. What are the infrastructure requirements for the Northern and Southern Corridor flyovers? What environmental concerns might these generate?
  - b. What are the property impacts of an I-280/SR-87 viaduct, both North and South of the Diridon Station, including the impact on transit-oriented housing development?

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- c. What are the impacts of a viaduct to the Tamien Station, planned transit-oriented development in Tamien, and surrounding amenities like Tamien Park?
  - d. Is it possible to shift Caltrain, High Speed Rail, and other heavy rail operators onto a viaduct?
  - e. From a track design perspective, Union Pacific (UP) requires that freight tracks not exceed a one percent grade. Can the Partner Agencies request a variance that would support UP service on a viaduct? What is UP's response?
  - f. What are the potential visual impacts of the viaduct option?
  - g. What can the community anticipate in terms of the number of tracks and trains to support the Caltrain Service Vision, and High Speed Rail service, in the Gardner/Gregory/North Willow Glen neighborhoods? What potential corridor and track treatments and best practices are being considered for the existing corridor at this time?
  - h. What are the likely impacts to Fuller Park in the existing corridor scenario? What are the likely property impacts in the Gregory/Gardner/North Willow Glen neighborhoods?
  - i. What specific commitments can the City and the DISC Partner Agencies make to the surrounding community regarding mitigations of noise, vibration, visual impact, air quality, and safety?
5. Direct Staff to continue working with the DISC Partner Agencies and consultants to identify improved access for riders of BART, Light Rail, and bus from the station.
  6. During the next phase of project development, direct Staff to continue working to identify the optimal location of an airport connector connection to the station.

## **BACKGROUND**

We thank staff and the consultant teams of each of the Partner Agencies for their collaborative work on the very complex rail and station planning. The station and each of the transit systems present extraordinary opportunities for vastly improved transit service and mobility, but also present challenges that appear multi-dimensional, with many competing and worthy interests. While we plan for the immediate opportunities, we must also have an eye to future-proofing our most critical infrastructure investment in San José.

We support elevating the tracks and platforms, which brings significant benefits in the station area in urban integration of the station with surrounding neighborhoods, street activation, and provision for safe circulation of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles underneath the tracks at street-level. Additionally, we support the dual station entrances on Santa Clara Street and near San Fernando Street, with the two station halls, featuring iconic architecture and outdoor public spaces to provide increased visibility, intuitive wayfinding, and a dynamic public realm.

Issues regarding the northern and southern track approaches raise more challenging issues and potentially conflicting interests, however. The decisions that we make on the Diridon Integrated Station Concept (DISC) Plan will outlive us all, and therefore we don't take lightly our responsibility to ensure staff has fully vetted, and the community and Council understands, the options that are in front of us. Our community has invested a great deal of time and effort—some for more than a decade—and has monitored this process carefully. We must clearly and

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transparently articulate the tradeoffs presented by the construction of a viaduct versus the use of the existing Southern Corridor for all trains.

To that end, we recommend a study session in early January, at a time convenient for public attendance, to address important questions on the alignment options and the tradeoffs we must consider. We also will push to ensure that whatever choices are made, 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.

Decisions we make on the DISC Plan impact long-established neighborhoods, guide the development of new neighborhoods, optimize once-in-a-generation transit infrastructure investment, and articulate our grand vision for our gateway to San José. Let's ensure that our community and Council fully understand our choices ahead.