

# Workshop Summary Report

Downtown San Rafael Station Area Plan – *Community Visioning Workshop*

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*Tuesday November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
San Rafael Corporate Center, 750 Lindero Street*



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## Acknowledgements

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- § Phil Abey
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- § Bill Carney
- § Gladys Gilliland
- § Glenn Koorhan
- § Diane Linn
- § Kay Noguchi
- § Joanne Webster
- § Abraham Yang

## Introduction

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The Downtown San Rafael Station Area Plan effort, funded by a \$528,000 grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), is one of two station area plans being created by the City of San Rafael. These plans for the neighborhoods around San Rafael's two new Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) rail stations will set the stage to create vibrant, mixed-use, livable areas supported by a mix of transit opportunities, including passenger rail service. The Station Area Plans are a multi-agency collaborative planning effort between the City of San Rafael, Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART), Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD), Marin Transit, the San Rafael Redevelopment Agency, the County of Marin, and the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM). As a partner in MTC's grant program, the Association of Bay Area Governments is also involved in the planning project.

The effort includes two public workshops, the first of which occurred on Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at the San Rafael Corporate Center, 750 Lindero Street. This workshop was open and advertised to the public and project stakeholders, and attended by approximately 35 members of the public. The event began with an optional tour of the station planning area, and included a 30-minute open house before introductions and a brief presentation on the progress of the planning effort. The core of the workshop was a series of small group discussions, which occurred in a round robin format at six themed stations facilitated by volunteers in the community, members of the consultant team, and City staff. The stations were:

- § The SMART Station Block
- § Riding a Bike in the Area
- § Driving and Parking in the Area
- § Riding a Bus in the Area
- § Working and Owning a Business in the Area
- § Living in the Area

The workshop concluded with the consultant and City staff teams summarizing comments received at each station.

## Outreach Efforts

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Prior to the first workshop, extensive outreach efforts were conducted through various outlets to maximize public awareness of and involvement in the planning process. These efforts included:

- § Email notification to various stakeholder groups and their constituents
- § A write-up in *Snapshot*, the newsletter of the San Rafael City Manager
- § Flyers posted in buses and bus shelters
- § A press release to local newspapers
- § A posting on the City of San Rafael's homepage
- § A mailing to all business and commercial property owners in the plan area
- § A mailing to key stakeholders and nonprofit organizations in the area

As a result, 35 members of the public representing a diverse group of interests engaged in the 3-hour visioning process, providing valuable input and insight as the community plans for the future of San Rafael's downtown station area.

## Presentation Highlights

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To open the workshop, Al Boro, Mayor of San Rafael, offered introductory remarks, and Diane Linn, the Chair of the Redevelopment Agency Citizens Advisory Committee, echoed the Mayor's endorsement of the workshop's goal to help create a vision to plan for the future of the area surrounding the planned SMART station in Downtown San Rafael. Linda Jackson, Principal Planner, provided participants an overview of the project timeline, funding, and plan elements.



*Al Boro (Mayor of San Rafael) addresses the workshop participants.*

throughout downtown San Rafael. Downtown also exhibits a pedestrian friendly pattern of urban design, including short and traditional grid blocks, pedestrian welcoming building design, and an attractive pedestrian realm, especially on Fourth Street. Finally, many destinations exist within the study area, including restaurants, shops, jobs, and cultural institutions, all of which are accessible via many different modes of travel.

Challenges for future development in the area include the location of the station block, slightly removed from the heart of Downtown, the small size of most parcels in the area, and the need to accommodate parking. The Downtown San Rafael Station Area Plan will have to address these challenges.

Following Tim's presentation, Linda led participants in an exercise to imagine the station planning area in the year 2035 in preparation for the small group discussions. Participants were asked to focus on their vision of the future of the area--how they envisioned it to look 25 years from now--in terms of the appearance of the station area block, the bicycle and pedestrian experience, the driving and parking experience, the transit rider's experience, the mix of businesses, and the different types of housing. Participants then broke out into small group discussions at each of the six stations. Groups were asked to rotate stations and provide input on each theme.

Tim Rood, Principal of Community Design + Architecture, presented key insights based on the consultant team's existing conditions research and site studies. Tim's presentation explored the presence of "the ingredients of walkable urbanism" in Downtown San Rafael: Density, Diversity, Design, and Destinations. All of these are present thanks to the historic patterns of development and recent efforts to strengthen Downtown. There exists a dense concentration of jobs and a considerable and growing residential population. The area is also diverse, as a mix of businesses, cultural facilities, schools and other civic uses are mixed

## Visioning Activities

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### **Visioning Exercise: Favorite Station Areas of the World**

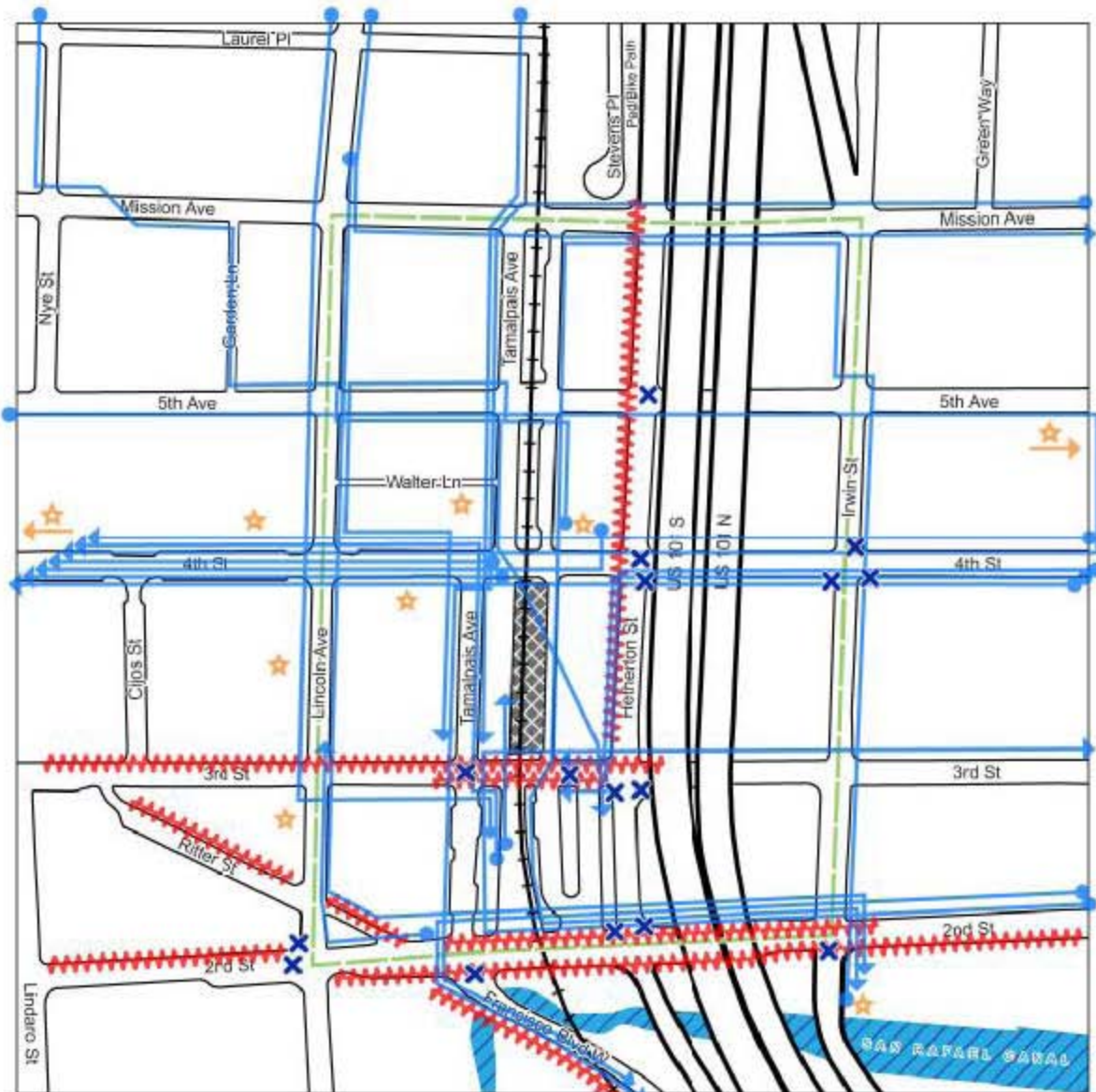
Workshop participants were asked to label their favorite station areas in the world, via a map and push pins. Answers ranged from local BART station areas, to larger and older ones in Europe and Asia. The exercise intended to get participants thinking about what makes station areas pleasurable places to frequent.



*Participants labeled their favorite station areas around the world.*

### **Visioning Exercise: Pedestrian Experience**





Workshop participants were also given a map of the Plan Area (the twelve blocks immediately surrounding the station site) and asked to record their ideas for improving the pedestrian environment throughout the course of the workshop and include any other comments for the consultant team and City staff to consider. These worksheets were collected at the end of the event for inclusion in the planning effort. Participants' pedestrian routes, along with the highlights and obstacles they noted, will be compared with the results of previous pedestrian counts and the consultant team's field observations. They will be used to inform the set of plan alternatives as they relate to pedestrian infrastructure. A map consolidating results from this exercise is presented on the next page.



## Pedestrian Experience Feedback

 SMART Station    
  Plan Area

### Participants' Pedestrian Experience Worksheet Data from Workshop #1

-  Participants' favorite destinations
-  Perceived poor intersection or crossing conditions
-  Perceived poor sidewalk conditions
-  Participants' walking routes

December 1, 2010  
San Rafael Downtown Station Area Plan



## Summary of Small Group Discussions

The following presents a summary of each visioning exercise and the comments received at each breakout station, including both a summary of comments and more specific and detailed notes from the group discussions. Posters presented at each station are also included.

### Station 1: SMART Station Block

Participants discussed a series of interrelated ideas at this station. There was a clear desire to have a strong sense of arrival and a civic and commercial anchor adjacent to the SMART platform, inspired by San Francisco's Ferry Building, likely in a renovated and repurposed Whistlestop building. Many participants also liked the idea of creating a plaza in the area. One idea was to create a plaza to the west of the station block, connecting to an entry to the SMART station from Tamalpais Avenue. A plaza could include a new building or buildings to frame the space, include trees and landscaping, feature a pedestrian pass-through to Lincoln Avenue, and relate to the station platform through an opening in the repurposed Whistlestop building, to be accessed by a mid-block crossing. Concepts for screening, burying or decking over US 101 to reduce its divisive impact were also discussed. Finally, participants proposed integrating the bus and train stations into a cohesive complex with easy access from adjacent blocks that favors pedestrians and bicyclists over motorists, and improved drop-off areas. Other suggestions included closing Tamalpais Avenue to auto traffic between Third and Fourth Streets and/or restricting access to only taxis, shuttles, and drop-off traffic, and narrowing the roadway to provide more space to accommodate pedestrians utilizing such services.



*Station 1 focused on the area immediately adjacent to the proposed SMART platforms.*

The poster presented at this station (see page 8) included aerials of the station block as well as pictures of current conditions and the Whistlestop and Citibank buildings. What follows are the transcribed notes from Station 1, including questions asked by facilitators and all suggestions and comments made by the public:

#### Questions asked:

- § It's easier and safer now to get to this block. What are the changes since 2010 that you see in 2035?
  - How did you get to the SMART station from the Transit Station?
- § What's happening at the Whistlestop building? What's here now?
- § Back in 2010 there was a large Citibank building on this block. What's happening there now?

#### Public suggestions and comments:

- § Covered waiting areas for bad weather
- § Restored Whistlestop train station that is part of the future transit center (waiting areas, ticket machines, café, SMART offices, etc.)
  - Modeled after the Ferry Building in San Francisco
  - New/re-construction in the Spanish Mission style
- § Easy access to platforms (ADA compliance), tamed/calmed traffic
- § Mid-block crossings that prioritize pedestrians/bicyclists
- § Increased and improved auto loading/unloading areas
- § Less asphalt, underground parking, moving sidewalks to/from parking

- § An open/permeable station that is easy to walk through/navigate
- § Big trees, lots of green, more nature, open “view lines”
- § A new plaza at entrance to station between Lincoln and Tamalpais Streets
  - Surrounded by cafes, shops, green (like Sonoma or Healdsburg – the Spanish model, maintaining a Spanish Mission architectural theme)
  - Incorporate the existing Victorian buildings on the block
  - Places to sit
  - Wide sidewalks, traffic calming
  - Close Tamalpais Avenue to auto traffic from 3rd to 4th Streets, or narrow the roadway and limit to taxi/shuttle/drop-off traffic
  - Cobblestone, landscaping, foodcarts, public art
- § Improved lighting to make the area safe and comfortable at night
- § Bike parking at station
- § High density buildings away from highway
- § Cover over the freeway
- § Use San Francisco BART stations as an example—stations that connect to buildings directly
- § A sign that welcomes travelers to San Rafael, invites them to stay/linger
  - Welcoming, “wow” factor, sense of arrival, character
  - Signs that point people to attractions, destinations, local businesses
  - Some sort of clocktower
- § Reorient transit center so that it runs North to South (don’t have to cross street to transfer from train to bus)
  - Coordinate bus/train stations as one transit center

# Workshop 1: Visioning

# Station 1: SMART Station Block



## San Rafael Downtown Station Area Plan

Community Design + Architecture • Arup • Strategic Economics

## Station 2: Bicycling in the Area

Key ideas in this station centered on improving bicycle connectivity through the station area along two axes. The first is a north-south link in the planned continuous multi-use pathway connecting the Stevens Place path through Downtown to the Mahon Creek path. The second is an east-west corridor as a connection between the north-south bicycle corridor, the planned Downtown SMART station, and nearby communities to the west such as San Anselmo and Fairfax. Several suggested that Mission and Fifth Avenues, and to some extent Fourth Street, provide the most effective east-west access for bicyclists because of more moderate auto speeds and narrower rights of way than those of Second and Third Streets, which many said to be unsuitable streets for bicycling. Many participants liked the idea of developing a bicycle route along Tamalpais Avenue from Mission Avenue to Second Street, through a combination of traffic calming or closing the street to auto traffic altogether. Some shared concerns about the design of the new Class I path planned for Hetherton. Many participants commented on a vision of a safe lateral connection from the Stevens Place bike path along Mission Avenue to reach Tamalpais Avenue. Other themes included the desire to have secure bicycle storage and shower facilities at the station site, and to have a safe connection south of Second Street, along Mahon Creek and the San Rafael Canal, to reach the Canal neighborhood.

The poster presented at this station (see page 10) included information and pictures of current bicycling conditions as well as information on different types of bicycle infrastructure. What follows are the transcribed notes from Station 2, including questions asked by facilitators and all suggestions and comments made by the public:

### Questions Asked:

- § Did you ride a bicycle on your tour today?
- § What changes have been made since 2010 that made it easier to ride your bike today?
- § If you didn't ride a bike today, who did you see on bikes? Where were they going?
- § What kind of bike amenities did you see in the area?

### Public Suggestions and Comments:

- § Better (wider) sidewalks
- § Close Tamalpais to cars from 3rd Street to Mission Street
- § Make 4th Street for pedestrians/bicyclists only (maybe also for small shuttle buses)
- § Problem at Mission Street/Hetherton with cars coming off freeway too fast and having to merge with bikes coming off of pathway
- § Separated bike lanes with concrete dividers to ensure safety – a Class I bikeway all the way through downtown
- § Bike paths along a restored canal, connecting the station area to the eastern parts of the city
- § Concentrate bike infrastructure in corridors that are separate from car routes
- § Large bike parking/lockup area at train station
- § Bike share system throughout the city, bike rental center at current Citibank location
- § Bike infrastructure elevated for those who wish to pass through the area quickly (to height of freeway), could easily be included on existing freeway bridge/flyover
- § Separated bike lane along Heatherton
- § Electric bikes are the future – plan for them now
- § Shower and changing facilities at the transit station and a gym with a sauna at Whistlestop
- § Connection from Canal to bike storage/rental facility
- § East-west corridor for bikes (4th or 5th Streets)
- § Safe environment for seniors (on foot or biking)
- § Improvements to connect San Anselmo to downtown San Rafael train station
- § People will be using the train for recreational biking trips
- § Buildings with dedicated bicycle parking spots and bike stations
- § Bicycle boulevards
- § Bicycle valet service



**Figure 9 – Pedestrian/Bicycle Conditions**

■ SMART Station  
■ Belfini Transit Center  
■ III Rail  
**Pedestrian Issues**  
↔ Pedestrian crossing of double left-turns  
↔ Prohibited pedestrian crossing  
**Existing Bicycle Facilities**  
— Class I multi-use path  
**Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program Projects**  
— Class I multi-use path    — Class II multi-use path  
— Class II multi-use path    — Sidewalk improvements  
♦ Proposed improvements in SRTC  
**Major Pedestrian Flows (Crosswalks >100 peds / hour)**  
➔ PM Peak Hour Pedestrian Volume

**CLASS I BIKEWAY**



Typically a multi-use path that is separated from motor vehicle routes, with two-way bicycle and pedestrian traffic.



**CLASS II BIKEWAY**



A designated lane for bicycles only, that is separated from motor vehicle lanes and the parking lane by striping, with one-way bicycle traffic.



**CLASS III and IIIb BIKEWAY**



A designated route for bicycles, where bicyclist share the roadway with motor vehicles. Class IIIb typically refer to shared routes on residential streets and are often called "bicycle boulevards."



### Station 3: Driving and Parking in the Area

Participants envisioned more readily available parking in the immediate station area. They also recognized that the presence of auto traffic surrounding the station block impedes transit access and limits pedestrian and bicycle access and safety. Three key ideas arose over the course of the participants' discussions. Some envisioned an extended parking district surrounding the station block as well as building a parking structure to accommodate cars and encourage walking within the station area. Many wanted to revitalize the areas beneath US 101—currently used for park-and-ride and some merchant/bank parking—with some lighting, art, landscape restoration, and other enhancements. Finally, most saw that in the future there would be an area near the station that de-emphasizes motor vehicles in favor of transit, pedestrians and bicyclists. Other ideas included covering the creek to provide more parking under US 101, building a new parking structure at Second Street and Lincoln Avenue, and removing parking along Fourth Street to build wider sidewalks.

The posters presented at this station (see pages 12 and 13) included maps and information of current congestion in the area and parking conditions. What follows are the transcribed notes from Station 3, including questions asked by facilitators and all suggestions and comments made by the public:

#### Questions asked:

- § Did you drive here for the tour?
- § What was it like to drive here?
- § What was it like to park here?
- § What does the parking look like?
- § Is there more parking or less than there was in 2010?
- § Where do you park in the Area (on-street, surface lot, structure)?
- § Are you willing to walk farther to certain destinations than others? Which ones?

#### Public Suggestions and Comments:

- § Fix Ritter Street to better serve pedestrians and cars
- § Pedestrian over passes, bridge to Canal/Montecito areas, separate bikes/pedestrians from traffic around the transit center
- § Use alleys for pedestrian circulation
- § Electric bike and smaller cars for more compact parking
- § Below grade parking at SMART station
- § Consolidate parking now under greenway into structure and restore the area under freeway with bike paths and urban stream
- § Expand parking under the freeway – cover the creek, stack the parking to maximize number of spaces
- § Additional parking structure at Lincoln and 2nd Streets – charge for parking to fund the structures
- § Parking district extension into area, reduce parking requirement near station
- § Use parking structure to “transform” drivers into walkers/bikers/transit riders
- § Dual use of parking structure for commuters during the day and residents at night
- § Parking should be at Civic Center station, not downtown.
- § Eliminate on street parking on 4th Street and widen sidewalks to draw pedestrians
- § Decouple residential parking requirements on new residential development
- § Each new residential development should supply their own parking
- § Residential parking permit program for nearby neighborhoods so they are not impacted by lack of parking near station
- § Designated/separated bus lane for commuters from west of San Rafael
- § Greater bus service to transit area, shuttle/trolley service on 4th Street
- § Keep Whistlestop building

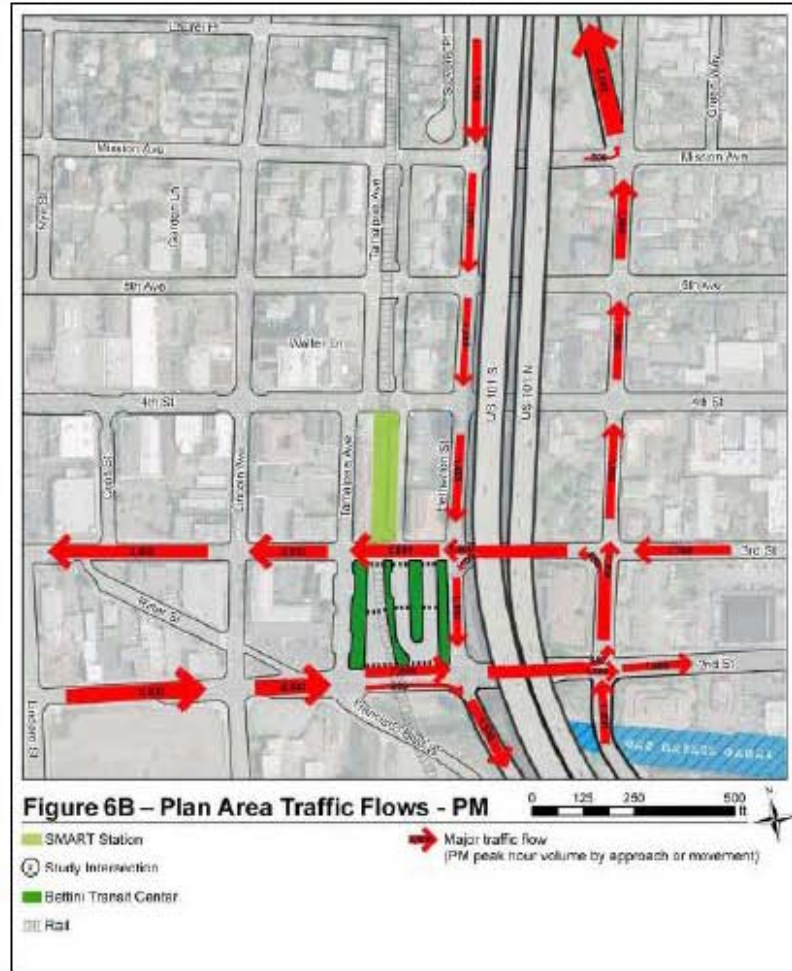
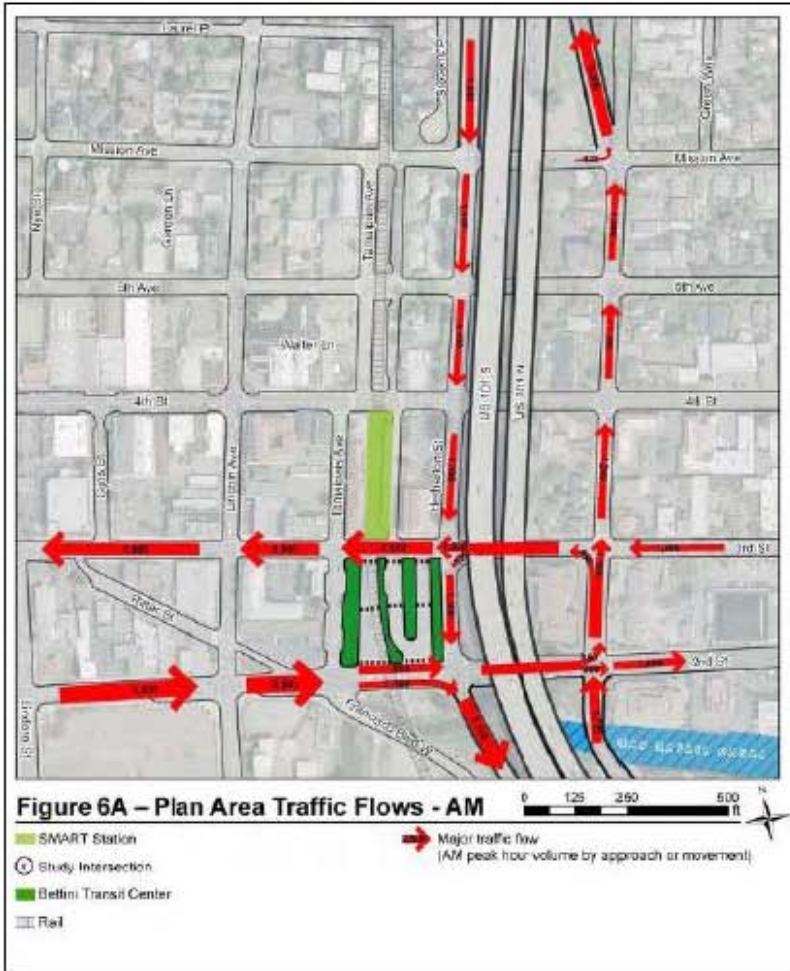




Figure 11 – Parking Inventory

- On-Street Parking
- Park and Ride Lot
- Cars Along Tracks East of Tamalpais Avenue
- Wharfstop Parking between 3rd Street and 4th Street
- Diagonal Parking Near Cliffbank West of Hatherton Street
- Private Parking Included in the Survey (Cliffbank Lot, and Two Lots Under US-101 Adjacent to 3rd Street)



The City of San Rafael's Downtown Parking Lots



- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. 3rd & C St. Parking Garage | 7. 29th & Linden              |
| 2. 3rd & B St. Parking Garage | 8. 28th & C St.               |
| 3. 3rd & Linden (N. St.)      | 9. 28th & C St.               |
| 4. 3rd & Linden (W. St.)      | 10. 28th & C St.              |
| 5. 3rd & C St. St. (N. St.)   | 11. 3rd & Linden (S. St.)     |
| 6. 3rd & Linden (W. St.)      | 12. 28th & C St. (Paved only) |
|                               | 13. 13th & B St.              |



San Rafael Downtown Station Area Plan



## Station 4: Riding a Bus in the Area

While few of the participants took a bus to or from the San Rafael Transit Center to reach the workshop, there existed several common themes between the different small visioning groups. Many envisioned an expanded bus terminal to accommodate more people and buses. Many also wanted to make transfers between buses and the planned SMART train safer and more fluid by better integrating the new SMART station with an expanded bus terminal. A number of comments centered around improving bus service, including improving congestion to allow buses to run on time, providing a free shuttle around Downtown, and stacking bus and train service in a single building to improve transfers and create spaces for commercial and other uses above the transit center. Many participants also suggested providing additional trees and vegetation around the transit center, for example, by including an accessible green roof on top of a proposed transit center building.

The poster presented at the station (see page 15) included maps and pictures of current pedestrian conditions in and around the Bettini Transit Center. What follows are the transcribed notes from Station 4, including questions asked by facilitators and all suggestions and comments made by the public:

### Questions Asked:

- § Did you ride a bus to/from the San Rafael Transit Center (SRTC) to the tour today?
  - Where did you come from and where are you going to after?
  - How has it changed since 2010?
  - What works, and what can be improved?
  - How does this block fit into the larger context of the SMART train station now that the train has been running for nearly two decades?
    - § How does the transit center interact with the train station?
    - § How do you get from one to the other?

### Public Suggestions and Comments:

- § Development on top of bus depot
- § Expanding the transit center, making transit transfers easy, safe, and convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists
- § Quieter buses (hybrid, hydro fuel cell) with reduced emissions/no fumes
- § Efficiency – no long waits for buses (high frequency, timed/coordinated transfers)
- § Transit area located between 4th and Mission Streets, or somewhere that is more bike/pedestrian friendly than current location
- § Safe connections to transit center, safe crossing of tracks for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers
- § Traffic congestion improved so buses run on time, easy bus access to highway
- § Place to get snacks/drinks as you wait for bus, lots of stores in front of the station
- § Make the train and bus facilities connected in a way that pedestrians/bicyclists don't have to cross a street to get to/from each station – pedestrian only zone for transit area
  - Traffic calming between the sites, raised intersections/crosswalks, clearly marked area to alert motorists
  - A pedestrian tunnel between the stations and between platforms
- § Easy parking in station area or under station for those driving to take train or bus
- § Stacked transit operations (ex: MUNI/BART subway on Market Street in San Francisco) to ensure safe, convenient connections that complement each other
- § Area surrounding bus station in welcoming, with big trees, attractive storefronts, streetscape improvements, greenery, places to sit/wait comfortably (covered areas during rain storms or a glass canopy over the entire station area)
- § No buses on 4th Street
- § Free shuttle or trolley from station to the center of town, along Fourth Street
- § Fast transit service from San Rafael to other points in the Bay Area, with limited transfers
- § Combine the train/bus station into one building with an attractive green roof/atriums/skylights
- § Move Airporter buses to back of Whistlestop building



Figure 4: Bus Transfers Between Platforms

**Major Platform to Platform Pedestrian Flows**

- ▬▬▬ Percent of daily transfer flows between platforms  
Source: Delmar Site Team
- ↻ Transfer on same platform  
(arrow scaled based on percentage)
- Transfer between platforms  
Arrow does not represent the actual path of travel  
(arrow scaled based on percentage)

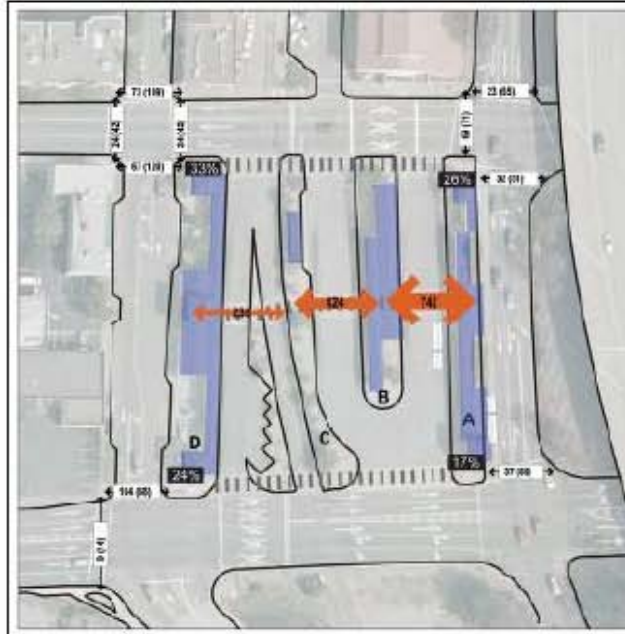


Figure 5: Pedestrian Access and Crosswalk Volumes

**Pedestrian Crosswalk Volumes (AM & PM Peak Hour)**      **SRTC Center Crosswalk Flow (6 to 9 AM)**

← 106 (130) → AM/PM Peak Hour Crosswalk Volume      ← 200 → Center Crosswalk Pedestrian Volume  
Source: City of San Rafael Counts      Source: MTC Regional Bus Stoppage Program

**Pedestrian Access to the SRTC (6 to 9 AM)**

▬▬▬ Distributor of Pedestrian Volumes at Main Access Points (%) - Based on AM peak period counts (6-9 AM)  
Source: MTC Regional Bus Stoppage Program



## Station 5: Working and Owning a Business in the Area

Participants had many ideas related to the future of businesses in the area. Four themes emerged. First, development in the future should contribute to a cohesive district that allows for architectural diversity and a mix of different businesses. Second, future destinations should be created to encourage people to stay, rather than simply pass through the area. The third big idea was that connectivity and the quality of the open space under US 101 and south towards the canal should be improved to maximize business opportunities on both sides of the freeway, with specific focus paid to extending Fourth Street's vibrant commercial activity to the east. A fourth theme was that development should be incentivized to attract new businesses to the area. Specific vision ideas included creating themed areas for certain types of businesses; restoring the Whistlestop building to provide high-end retail similar to that available in San Francisco's Ferry Building or in Oakland's Jack London Square; activating the canalfront with new businesses such as restaurants and bars that support more nightlife; and adding more smaller, local businesses. An additional theme centered on more parking with additional business activity. Suggested solutions included providing more parking under US 101 or building structured parking on the edge of the station area.



*Community residents of all ages provide input on what types of businesses they would like to see in the study area come 2035.*

The poster presented at this station (see page 18) included maps and pictures of current land uses and businesses in the area. What follows are the transcribed notes from Station 5, including questions asked by facilitators and all suggestions and comments made by the public:

### Questions Asked:

- § Do you work/operate a business in the Area?
  - Why did you choose your location?
  - What do you like about working or operating a business in the Area?
    - § Consider walkability, access to other goods and services, regional location, parking, etc.
- § What new businesses have sprung up in the Area since 2010?
  - What specific types of businesses (restaurants, clothing, sports equipment, other services)?
  - Who are the patrons (transit riders, residents, workers)?
  - Is there a difference between the businesses on the eastern side of the freeway as compared with the western side?
- § How did the City leverage SMART rail service for the benefit of the local economy?

### Public Suggestions and Comments:

- § Restore Whistlestop building and put in high end retail like the Ferry Building in San Francisco, and build platforms with access to old station so these new businesses are frequented (food, snacks, agricultural products)
- § Nightlife – bars, clubs, music
- § Cultural uses (museums, art galleries, etc – train museum?)
- § Make the area a destination, not just a travel/transfer point
  - Area should have its own vibrancy independent of transit station (ex: Jack London Square in Oakland, Ferry building in San Francisco)

- § Good signage to point people to local businesses/attractions – encouraging people to stay/linger/meander in area, not merely use it as a transfer point
- § Concentrate different uses in different areas (nightlife, cultural, restaurants, housing, commercial, etc)
- § Connect areas on west and east side of the freeway to extent benefits posed by SMART station – better lighting, signs, attractive stream/canal, basketball courts that area lit at night
- § Parking is perceived to be a problem for existing businesses and residents
  - To accommodate more businesses and residents, provide additional parking under the highway or in a new garage that is close to the Plan Area.
- § Create a destination along the canal similar to the San Antonio Riverwalk – businesses that front the water
  - Energize the back of Montecito Shopping Center
  - Link this area to 4th Street
- § Residential over retail to provide costumer base for future businesses
- § Make the area very walkable – prioritize pedestrians over cars to ensure cafes/restaurants can thrive, more opportunities for outdoor eating, café style seating
  - People traffic will be very attractive to businesses
  - Mini-parks and rest areas between businesses/activity nodes
  - Place to eat a sandwich or meal you bought at café and read the paper or a book
  - Extend pedestrian flow from 4th Street to station area
- § Types of businesses:
  - Small, locally run (no franchises)
  - Keep the small town feel of San Rafael
  - All types of food related businesses
  - Everyday purchases (ex: drugstore)
  - Businesses that are attractive to commuters (gym, laundry mat, coffee, bike repair shop or bike rental shop, florist, etc)
  - Businesses that serve residents
  - Promote innovative office uses, clean tech/green tech
  - Put offices along freeway/on east side of freeway
  - Hotel? Near station or along canal
  - Public art to draw people in/shop
  - Businesses that encourage people to come at non-commute times to make the area lively and maximize the investment in the train
  - Semi-permanent farmer's market
- § A mix of uses that acts as an entryway to downtown instead of a new downtown
- § Make it easy to do business in the area and to develop property in the area
  - Financial incentives/tax benefits
  - Business Improvement District
  - Tie in financing/partner with banks





*At Station 6 community members discussed future housing types and what it will be like to live in the station area come 2035*

## Station 6: Living in the Area

Participants provided a wealth of ideas in support of additional housing in the station area. Themes that emerged from the discussions included constructing dense housing to provide further riders for the SMART rail line, mixing uses, green building principles, and high-quality outdoor public spaces for community gathering and events for residents to enjoy diversity and vitality in the character of buildings. Many liked the idea of higher-density housing, especially mixed use buildings with retail uses on the ground floor and residential uses above, and with particular emphasis for housing along Lincoln and Tamalpais Avenues. Many placed emphasis on convenience and a desire to have

everything you need within walking distance of your home so many can live in the area without owning a car. Some identified green building practices and LEED certification as important elements of future housing developments. While certain concerns about excessive density were voiced, there was a consensus around providing higher-density housing to make the area a vital, vibrant gateway to San Rafael.

The poster presented at this station (see page 21) included maps and pictures of current land uses in the area and examples of transit oriented development. What follows are the transcribed notes from Station 6, including questions asked by facilitators and all suggestions and comments made by the public:

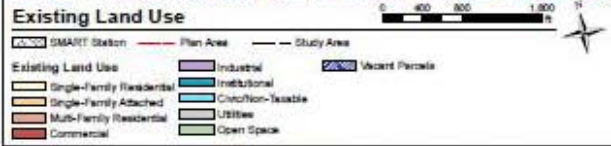
### Questions Asked:

- § Imagine you live in the Area:
  - What do you like about living here in 2035?
  - Where are you shopping, working, playing? Describe your typical day.
- § Has new housing been built in the area since 2010?
  - What types of residences (rental, condo)?
  - Where is the housing located?
- § Are there new business, services or civic uses that have made the Area a more desirable place to live?

### Public Suggestions and Comments:

- § Convenience, everything you need within walking distance so many can live in the area without owning a car
- § Neat character – an interesting and exciting area with a good mix of activity and things to do
- § A safe area for people of all ages
- § A possible trolley on 4th Street connecting to Fairfax and the Miracle Mile
- § Diversity of people (ethnicity and age)
- § Eco-friendly
  - A canopy of trees
  - Pedestrian bulb-outs at intersections
  - A restored canal with reeds, native plantings, picnic spots, wildlife
  - LEED certification
- § Thoughtful approach to building heights
  - this is not Dallas, don't want anything taller than the freeway; no "urban canyon" feel
- § Architectural congruence; buildings that fit together/feed off of existing Whistlestop building
- § This is a suburban town, but want a critical mass of density to provide ridership for the train and customers for a future retail cluster

- Higher density housing on Lincoln
- § Envisioning area as a gateway to San Rafael – a European style plaza/gathering place with a warm feel and residential opportunities
- § Mini-parks, places to spend time outside, chess boards
  - Fishing in canal, park-like area, waterfront recreation
  - A pedestrian plaza – bikes and pedestrians only (no cars) similar to European plazas
  - A band-shell, dance floor, or other type of public music venue
- § Enhance connectivity
  - Through better lighting and making the area more comfortable and safe – achieve a similar urban feel on both sides by maximizing connectivity to downtown and the canal area
  - Better signage/wayfinding
  - Sidewalks on Francisco to connect to the commercial district
  - Minimize the impact of the freeway
  - Bury the freeway?
  - Build a 2nd deck over the entire area for pedestrians to separate them from the traffic below, similar to the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco (raised gardens with escalators, moving walkways, elevators, retail shops fronting the raised pathway)
  - Bridges between buildings (like the Embarcadero Center)
- § Make the area a meeting place – a destination that makes it worth taking the train
  - Farmers market
- § Minimize noise in the area
  - A quiet train
  - Soundproof the buildings
- § Provide sufficient parking in the area so nearby neighborhoods are not overwhelmed
  - Paid parking structure (private)
- § Retain social services for the elderly in the area
- § Shopping/services:
  - mom & pop shops (minimize chains)
  - Coffee Shops
  - Restaurants that attract people to the area
  - Diverse ethnicities served (especially regarding food)
  - Clothing stores (currently lacking men's/children's clothing stores in area)
  - Childcare
  - Corner/street vendors
  - Hotel
  - Medical facility/doctors office
  - Gym/yoga/Pilates
  - Bar/live music venue
  - University
  - Something similar to the Ferry Building in San Francisco
  - Food truck area
  - A modest/small convention center?
- § Housing above shops to keep area vibrant after-hours
- § Housing for single professionals
- § Engage students at university/housing
- § Broad mix of age groups and housing options (family/multi-bedroom, rental/condo, etc.)
- § Concentrate residents on West Tamalpais



**San Rafael Downtown Station Area Plan**



## Wrap Up

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Following the small group discussions, the facilitators reported back to the larger group on the highlights of public input from each station. The comment summaries were as follows:

### Station 1 FINAL SUMMARY:

1. Station Building = Ferry Building (SF)
2. Plaza between Lincoln and Tamalpais
3. Integrated bus/train complex

### Station 2 FINAL SUMMARY:

1. Connecting North and South
  - a. Overpass for Cyclists
    - i. An elevated "clip-on" that parallels US101 from Stevens Place path to Mahon Creek
  - b. Close Tamalpais to cars or Woonerf treatment/traffic calming/limited access for taxi/shuttle only
  - c. Hetherton street is bad/auto conflict
2. Connecting East and West
  - a. Mission and 5th (good)
  - b. 2nd and 3rd (bad)
  - c. 4th Street (ok)
3. Bike Storage and Shower Facilities (at SMART station/SRTC)

### Station 3 FINAL SUMMARY:

1. Extend parking district into area and build parking structures
2. Revitalize area beneath highway 101
3. Create a transit/pedestrian/bicycle area that de-emphasizes cars

### Station 4 FINAL SUMMARY:

1. Expanded bus center
2. Integrated bus center with SMART station
3. Safe and fast pedestrian transfers between bus and train

### Station 5 FINAL SUMMARY:

1. Cohesive neighborhood that allows for architectural diversity and a mix of businesses
2. Destination uses that encourage people to stay
3. Better connectivity/open space under freeway to maximize business opportunities on both sides of 101, extend 4th Street vibrancy, and connect the area to the canal
4. Create incentive to encourage development and attract businesses to the area

### Station 6 FINAL SUMMARY:

1. Safe to walk and bike
  - a. Streetcars/trolley on 4th Street
2. Outdoor public spaces for community gathering and events
3. Diversity and Vitality

Linda Jackson then thanked all the participants and reminded them that the next public workshop will be scheduled for the Spring of 2011, once draft alternatives have been developed.