

MOUNTAIN VIEW TRANSIT CENTER MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY MEETING

Summary of Transit Center Master Plan Community Meeting

Thursday, February 2, 2017

The City of Mountain View hosted a community meeting on May 10, 2016, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. to discuss Transit Center concepts. The meeting was held at the Old Adobe, 157 Moffett Boulevard in Mountain View. Approximately fifty-five (55) community members attended the meeting.

City staff Jim Lightbody, Project Manager, spoke at the meeting. Adam Dankberg (Kimley-Horn Project Manager), Chelsey Cooper (Kimley-Horn), and Eileen Goodwin (Apex Strategies, Community Outreach lead) represented the project team.

This was the third meeting with the community on the Mountain View Transit Center Master Plan. It was the first meeting that focused solely on the transit center site opportunities, with the previous meetings focused on the configuration of Castro Street at the rail crossing. The purpose of this community meeting was to get input from the community on the transit center concepts developed thus far and distinctive elements. The meeting was framed by a PowerPoint presentation that covered the purpose and goals of the project as well as existing conditions. The bulk of the meeting included a presentation of concepts and design variations while answering questions and taking feedback on options. The feedback was gathered through informal raised-hand votes and comments by topic area. Straw ballot counts and community comment are included in this meeting summary.

Meeting Summary:

The meeting started at 6:00 p.m. In addition to the personnel there to answer questions and present information, approximately fifty-five (55) members of the public attended. Approximately two-thirds of the public indicated that they had attended one or more of the previous project meetings. About 20 percent of the attendees said the City's e-blast was how they found out about the meeting. Nextdoor was acknowledged as another way attendees found out about the meeting from 45 percent of the attendees. A set of large saw-horse style posters in the station area promoting the meeting was seen by half of the attendees. The e-lists from Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning, Friends of Caltrain and the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition were also popular ways people heard about the meeting.

Over half of attendees identified as both transit riders and neighbors with about 20 percent of the audience identifying themselves as bicyclists or pedestrians crossing Central Expressway and the transit center to access downtown and other destinations.

After a brief introduction by the City's Project Manager, the Kimley Horn project manager spoke to a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation oriented the attendees to the purpose of the project. To close the presentation, the Kimley Horn Project Manager presented the process and a schedule of next steps.

During and after the presentation many questions, suggestions and opinions were offered to the staff and project team. The comments and questions offered during the meeting are captured below, associated with the topic they relate to. Responses are indicated where available.

General Topics:

- How will increased noise with more trains be managed? Do any of these projects help with that?
 - Response: Removal of the grade separation at Castro Street should reduce train noise.
- What is the schedule for the two phases of this effort?
 - Response: The grade separation would hopefully be complete by 2021 when Caltrain starts more service. The transit center would likely be in the same timeframe or later.
- Will High Speed Rail (HSR) need additional track through here, has that been considered?
 - Response: It has been considered. HSR has informed the project team that it does not need a passing track in Mountain View. If, in the distant future, it was determined to be necessary, a future project could depress VTA light rail and deck over it for rail capacity if necessary
- Will this city be a HSR stop?
 - Response: No
- Where will the Farmer's Market be in the future?
 - Response: That is currently being investigated

Car and Shuttle Drop-Off Locations:

VOTE: Concept 2: 33%; Concept 3: 33%; Concept 4: 33%; None: 1 vote

- Previously submitted an idea for the public bus and shuttle drop-off to be on the north side of Central Expressway east of Moffett Boulevard. What happened to that? How many shuttles are headed to and from north of Central Expressway. It would be good to get shuttles out of downtown and would be cheaper. Shuttle left turns are a problem. Circulation should be clockwise not counter clockwise.
 - Response: A shuttle area on the north side of Central Expressway would significantly impact existing residents and businesses and thus was explored but is not recommended at this time. Many, but not all, shuttles are going north of Central Expressway.
- Can you get under Central without crossing traffic?
 - Response: Bicycle and pedestrian under-crossings
- The concepts should be like Third Street in Santa Monica (closure of Castro Street). Evelyn should be improved as a through route.
- Concept 3 makes pedestrians/bus riders cross more streets, prefer Concept 2 or 4 as a result.
- Concept 3 utilizes the wrong side of Moffett. Private cars head toward the station to drop off riders. The design seems circuitous. Moffett has lots of lanes, perhaps the current two lefts can become one and the additional width can be used for a bike lane.
- Concern that with all this drop off and pick up, the station will be like SFO with people roused for staying too long and just driving around.
- Is Concept 2 taking a lane off Moffett?
 - Response: No. We will revisit the traffic analysis to determine if a southbound turn lane could be reduced with all alternatives.
- How will the bus route work for those headed to Palo Alto (Concept 2)?
 - Response: One option would be to provide a turning movement from eastbound (southbound) Central Expressway to Easy Street, which would provide access to SR-85, Middlefield, and to US-101

Central Expressway:

VOTE: Concept 2: 15%; Concept 3: 50%; Concept 4: 40%; None: 1 vote

- Likes Concept 4, pedestrian drop off. Concern regarding mixing shuttles with non-shuttles for drop offs since they have different dwell times.

- Can there be commercial development in the underpass under Central? That should be looked at.
- Echoing safety concerns regarding the tunnels. Caltrain tunnels are much shorter than what is proposed here.
- The proposed bridge is ugly, but likes the proposed shuttle lane there.
- How much could Central be depressed? A partial split of the facility with the crossing could allow for multiple access points, in and out and over Central.

Parking:

VOTE: Concept 1: No votes; Concept 2: 33%; Concept 3: 33%; Concept 4: 70% (1/2 like Central garage access option); None: No votes

- How would a parking garage be shared with shoppers? Are there techniques to manage shared Caltrain parking?
 - Response: There are a variety of ways to manage shared parking to ensure that parking is available for both transit riders and downtown users. Those will be explored in a future phase of the project.
- Does each option have the same amount of parking in it?
 - Response: Yes, planning for 500-750 spaces in all options
- Underground parking is used elsewhere and works well. Prefer it.
- This parking takes up prime real estate under several options. That is a problem. We would rather have retail, inviting spaces, something that generates money for the city.
- Want tax revenue, need to reinforce previous speaker's theme. Your statistics say only 11%-15% arrive by car today, why would we want more parking. The priority should be transit and other modes.
- Concepts 2 and 4 show three traffic lights while Concept 3 has one please explain
 - Response: We are currently evaluating traffic conditions under each of the concepts and will refine the need for traffic signals during the evaluation process

- It is hard to “vote” on parking without knowing what land use choices will be made. Does this parking contemplate a change? We would be going in the wrong direction if is assuming more solo drivers.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation:

VOTE: Concept 1: No votes; Concept 2: 1 vote; Concept 3: 40%; Concept 4: 60%; None: No votes

- What can be done to make tunnels secure? Concerns regarding tunnels and safety. What about after dark?
 - Response: A combination of patrols, lighting, cameras, width, designed without nooks, etc.
- People use Castro/Moffett to travel through the area not just to use transit. There is a need for a tunnel all the way to Evelyn.
- How does the pedestrian and bicycle traffic get separated? Are there barriers?
 - Response: In tunnels and along the bicycle/pedestrian corridor, there will be signage and striping to designate separate areas.
- Large secure bike parking is desired. Does not look like you have factored in enough of that.
 - Response: We have analyzed future bike parking needs and are currently planning for sufficient space to allow for a several hundred percent increase in bike parking demand.
- There are flaws with all concepts. There are choke points created. The service to LRT for example seems to load only from one side. That is a problem. Need to consider and plan for through traffic not destined for transit. The through traffic should not be mixed in with train traffic.
- Whether bike or pedestrian everything should be well marked and signed. Kaiser in Santa Clara does a good job with wayfinding. There are lots of signs. It will be hard to get through an underground plaza without good signage.
- The crossing of Central Expressway is difficult to do. There are just six crossings spread about a mile apart which is a long way for a pedestrian. That is why we feel that it is a big deal to have an undercrossing under Central Expressway and that it be a large space going all the way through. There should be an extended concourse with lots of retail and room for lots of people.

- The bike/ped access should focus on downtown. Walking a bike is not bike access.
- I am not transit user. I want to get to downtown and through the station area.

Plaza:

VOTE: Concept 1: 2 votes; Concept 2: 20%; Concept 3: 30%; Concept 4: 60%; None: No votes

- Is the existing train station relocated?
 - Response: Depends on the concept; it is retained in Concept 2, removed in Concept 3, and relocated in Concept 4.
- Downtown should be extended across Central Expressway to bring good retail past the Adobe and expand downtown. There should be a plaza over Moffett. That would be a big benefit.
- (Regarding Concept 4) How deep is the “pit?”. The transition must be gradual or it will look bad.
 - Response: The tunnels will be approximately 16’ deep
- (Regarding Concept 4) There needs to be a shortest route to downtown that is not impacted.
- (Regarding Concept 4) There needs to be escape routes. How can a bicyclist get through an event? Will I have to walk my bike? That is not desirable. Any plaza must be open to the light. Do not make us feel trapped. Go get an amphitheater designer and go first class.
- (Regarding Concept 4) What would the amphitheater be used for? How would it generate revenue? It will be a big pit when not in use.
- (Regarding Concept 4) Concerned about amplification of sound. This could be a real problem. Sound travels. This is not a good place for concerts.
- Bring in people who know how to design public spaces such as Jan Gehl of Making Cities for People fame.
- (Regarding Concept 4) How practical is it to have concerts next to trains?
- The amphitheater would likely trigger an elevator due to regulations on ramps. There should be a park with trees and seating and not a pit.

- (Regarding Concept 4) Lower level plaza loses relationship with Castro Street and transit oriented development opportunities.
- Like the option that shifts the station. It is better for access to both sides of Moffett.

Transit Oriented Development:

VOTE: Concept 2: 4 votes; Concept 3: 35%; Concept 4: 70%; None: 2 votes

- For concept 4, have you factored into the equation the new residents and the revenue they would generate as part of an off-set for the cost assumptions?
 - Response: Yes, funds from transit-oriented development opportunities may help offset transit center costs.
- On Concept 3, develop some and leave some as a future location for the Farmer's Market.
- Can there be exploration of making development into park space?
- The land use plan will drive the rest of the plan and not the other way around. Encourage that more detail be given to Council and that land use be the first topic not the last in the presentation.
- Suggest that this topic go to the Environmental Planning Committee prior to Council
- There are more human land uses than parking. The human space and priorities should go first.
- Land use can help with problem solving. It is Transit Center versus "the big picture." If land use decisions are done correctly, then they can help fund the Transit Center. We suggest you start with the big picture. Take inspiration from the Getty Museum retail space.