

DATE: October 18, 2016

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: James Lightbody, Project Manager
Linda Forsberg, Transportation and Business
Manager
Michael A. Fuller, Public Works Director

VIA: Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

TITLE: **Mountain View Transit Center Master Plan –
Parking**



PURPOSE

The purpose of this Study Session is to solicit City Council input and direction on conceptual alternatives and key issues regarding parking facilities to be included as part of the Mountain View Transit Center Master Plan.

BACKGROUND

The City Council approved the development of a comprehensive Master Plan for the Caltrain Station and Transit Center in November 2014 as a next-step action item from the Shoreline Transportation Corridor Study. At a March 3, 2015 Study Session, the Council provided further direction regarding the proposed master planning effort and specifically indicated that an exploration of grade separation options for the existing at-grade rail crossing at Castro Street, including the possible closure of Castro Street to vehicular traffic at the rail tracks, be a part of the master planning process.

Based on the Council's direction, the master planning effort is being conducted in two phases. The first phase, the identification of a preferred grade separation alternative for the Castro Street rail crossing, was completed on June 22, 2016, with Council's approval of a preferred grade separation plan that calls for rerouting Castro Street vehicle traffic at the rail tracks.

The second phase, the development of a plan for improved Transit Center services and facilities, is under way. One critical element of the Phase 2 planning effort, parking facilities, is the focus of this Study Session discussion, which builds on the other Study Session on the October 18 Council agenda regarding downtown parking demand. Other elements of the Transit Center improvement plan, including station platforms,

bus/shuttle facilities, bicycle access and facilities, entry plaza, as well as other uses and elements, will be discussed during a Study Session scheduled for November 22, 2016.

A final conceptual Master Plan for the Mountain View Transit Center is scheduled for presentation to the City Council in early 2017.

It is important to note that the Transit Center is owned and operated by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain) and is not controlled by the City. The Master Plan is being developed in coordination with Caltrain and, once approved by the City Council, will be the basis of further conversations with Caltrain about the scope of improvements, funding, responsibilities of the various stakeholders, and other matters.

DISCUSSION

Existing and Future Parking Conditions at Transit Center

The current Mountain View Transit Center and Caltrain Station (Transit Center) was jointly planned and developed by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Caltrain, and the City in the late 1990s. The design was based on ridership estimates for 2010 and assumed approximately 1,000 riders in the morning three-hour peak period. Currently, the Transit Center serves more than three times that number during the same period. Nearly 4,300 boarding Caltrain riders and 1,300 VTA light rail riders pass through the Transit Center each weekday. An additional 1,000 daily riders are served by other transportation services at the Transit Center, including: VTA buses, Caltrain shuttles, Transportation Management Association (TMA) MVgo shuttles, private employer shuttles, and the Mountain View Community Shuttle.

A large surface parking lot owned and operated by Caltrain is available for rail and transit users (Figure 1). The lot, with 340 spaces, extends along Evelyn Avenue from midway between Hope and View Streets to just north of Madera Way. The lot is fully utilized on weekdays and usually reaches capacity between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. The parking lot includes 10 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant spaces and 3 designated spaces for taxis. The daily price for parking is \$6. Discounted pricing is available to Caltrain monthly pass users (\$60 per month).



Figure 1 – Mountain View Transit Center

The parking lot is also used by Transit Center users for passenger pick up and drop off, and for some shuttle drop offs. It serves as the site of the Farmers’ Market on weekends, except on San Francisco 49er football game dates. For 49er games and other events at Levi’s Stadium, the lot, with special event pricing, serves those attending the events on VTA light rail and buses.

On weekdays, Caltrain riders also park on nearby streets that are not subject to time restrictions. Based on informal field surveys of on-street parking, staff estimates that 150 to 200 Caltrain riders regularly rely on street parking (generally in three areas as shown in Figure 2), instead of using the Caltrain lot because the lot is full when they arrive at the Transit Center or because they are avoiding the parking charge. If any of the areas currently impacted by on-street Transit Center parking elect to participate in the City’s recently approved residential permit parking program, it is likely that some or all of these street spaces may not be available in the future.

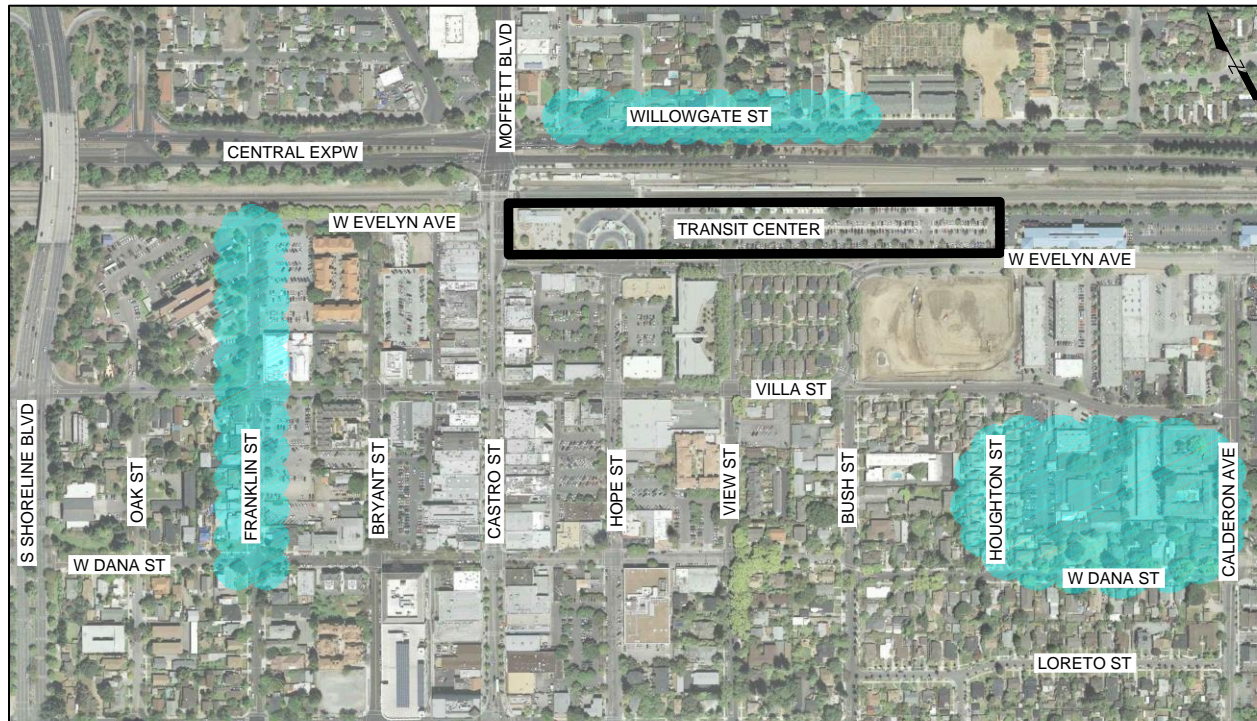


Figure 2 – Street Parking Areas

Combining the number of Transit Center users who park in the Caltrain lot with the estimated number of those who park on nearby streets, there are approximately 500 to 550 Caltrain riders driving to and parking at/near the Transit Center each weekday morning. This number represents between 30 percent and 35 percent of all of the boarding riders at that time of day, meaning that an already substantial 65 percent to 70 percent of riders are using an alternative access mode (more than 40 percent walk and bike according to a 2014 Caltrain On-Board Survey) to travel to/from the Transit Center.

To better understand the characteristics of those parking at the Transit Center, a short survey was prepared and distributed in the morning at the Transit Center in spring 2016. While the response was relatively low in terms of the number of completed surveys (about 10 percent of those parking), the results were consistent enough to provide a good profile of the survey respondents. More specifically, these characteristics include:

- Eighty percent (80%) of respondents parked in the Caltrain lot and 20 percent on nearby streets.
- All respondents were traveling from home. Based on zip code information provided, approximately 45 percent live in Mountain View. The zip codes for the

remaining 55 percent were spread out, extending as much as 15 miles to the southeast, but generally following along the State Route 85 corridor.

- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the respondents reported arriving by 7:00 a.m., and 95 percent by 8:00 a.m.
- One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents were Caltrain riders; there were no VTA light rail or bus riders.
- Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents were destined for San Francisco (4th and King Caltrain Station). A few reported their final destination was a mid-Peninsula station, and only one respondent indicated they were taking a southbound train.

With the planned growth in Caltrain service, ridership could double over the next 10 to 15 years, resulting in additional parking demand at the Mountain View Transit Center. The Environmental Impact Study prepared for the Caltrain Electrification Project estimated (through Travel Demand Model calculations) that there would be demand for 800 to 1,000 parking spaces at the Mountain View Transit Center. However, Caltrain Access Plan policies emphasize other access modes at key intermodal stations, such as Mountain View, and may not support such significant increases in parking supply at the station. Discussion is continuing with Caltrain staff to define a preferred amount of parking.

Parking Alternatives

Several parking alternatives for the Transit Center are currently being evaluated. City Council input/direction is requested regarding the alternatives, as well as the potential options and issues identified for the alternatives.

To modify or expand the current parking lot, structured parking (or underground parking) could be developed on a portion of the Transit Center property. Even with expanding the supply of parking, a structure may be needed to replace some spaces lost to provide expanded facilities for transit, shuttle, or other uses at the Transit Center. A larger parking structure could provide expanded parking for Transit Center customers, additional parking for downtown customers, and potentially make some portion of the Transit Center property available for commercial or residential development.

Key issues related to a parking structure include:

1. Parking Structure Size, Use, and Location.

The Transit Center site allows for a parking structure that could range in size from about 500 to 1,000 spaces. Table 1 below provides a summary of possible options. These options are intended to be illustrative of possible structures in terms of capacity, height, length, and other factors. Parking levels could be above (potentially up to six levels) or below grade (up to two levels).

Table 1 – Parking Structure Alternatives

Option	Spaces	Length (ft.)	Size	Sharing Potential (Spaces)		
			Note	Levels of Parking	Weekday (est.)	Evening and Weekends
1	490	360	1 City Block	4	0	370
2	530	260	0.5 City Block	6	0	410
3	680	360	1 City Block	6	130	560
4	740	540	1.5 City Blocks Above Transit Center	4	190	620
5	830	540	1.5 City Blocks	5	280	710
6	1,060	770	View Street to Eastern End of Transit Center	4	510	940

Key issues to consider include:

- a. Possible number of levels and structure height and whether some of the parking should be located below ground.
- b. Length of structure – Ideally, to facilitate access to the adjacent street grid, the structure would take up a single block located between Hope and View Streets or between View and Bush Streets, or could (if it is a larger structure) extend to the end of the Transit Center near Madera Way.
- c. Location – The structure could be located closer to the station and Castro Street (most convenient for Caltrain users and potential downtown parking

- use) or further down Evelyn Avenue (allowing other uses of the prime Transit Center property). The location could influence the amount and type (residential or commercial) of development that might be considered on the Transit Center site.
- d. Shared parking with the City – While a smaller parking facility (up to about 500 to 550 spaces) might require that the spaces continue to be dedicated to Caltrain users on weekdays, the use of those spaces for downtown customers could be allowed for those parking after 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and all day on weekends. Caltrain has similar arrangements with other cities, including Sunnyvale. A larger facility (with more than 500 spaces) might also provide some available spaces during weekdays (for downtown workers and customers). In that case, parking on lower floors could be free and/or time-limited, while parking on other floors would be reserved for Transit Center users.
 - e. In order to make efficient use of the Transit Center site, the ground floor of the parking structure may be needed for uses other than parking. Some possibilities include:
 - (1) Transit/shuttle boarding area.
 - (2) Possible staging area for buses, shuttles, taxis.
 - (3) Curb space for pick up/drop off, including taxi/Uber/Lyft.
 - (4) Bike station for daily bike parking/bike servicing.
 - f. Commercial, retail or residential development could also be integrated with a parking structure. More information about development opportunities will be provided at the November 22, 2016 Study Session.
2. Other Issues.

As the City Council continues to discuss future plans for the Transit Center, the following additional topics will need to be discussed and addressed:

- a. Parking Management – Currently, City Forestry and Roadway Landscaping crews, with a partial reimbursement of some routine maintenance expenses from Caltrain, maintain the Caltrain parking lot. Caltrain is responsible for

parking enforcement and revenue collection, using the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department.

If a decision is made to construct a parking structure, there will be additional management issues such as increased security and lighting and elevator maintenance. The City has experience with these issues through the operation of other downtown parking structures. Caltrain may prefer that the City manage such a facility with some type of a cost-sharing agreement. An example of this arrangement is the parking for the downtown San Mateo station.

- b. Access to parking would primarily be from Evelyn Avenue, but a ramp connector from Central Expressway is also being investigated.
- c. Use of the parking structure for special events, primarily Levi's Stadium events, will need to be considered.
- d. A permanent new location for the Farmers' Market may be needed.
- e. During construction, some or all of the current parking is likely to be displaced. Arrangements will be needed for temporary parking or other approaches (e.g., shuttles to remote parking).
- f. As noted previously, the Caltrain Access Policy seeks to reduce the demand for parking over time at key intermodal stations such as Mountain View. New access strategies will need to be explored, including better transit connections, expanded use (and possible subsidy) of ride-sharing services, and improved bicycle facilities and storage.
- g. A parking structure can also provide flexible space that can evolve to serve future needs. For example, space could be reserved for car-sharing vehicles, taxi staging, and potentially as a terminus for a future Automated Guideway Transit system.
- h. Potential Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) on the Transit Center site will be influenced by the size and location of a parking structure. Shared parking in the structure could also be extended to serve potential development parking needs. More information about TOD opportunities will be provided at the November 22, 2016 Study Session.

Community Outreach

This second phase of the Transit Center Master Plan project has included the following new community outreach activities since the June 22 City Council meeting/ discussion:

- **Project Website**—The project website (www.mountainviewtransitcenter.com) continues to provide information and updates regarding the master plan project. More than 200 individuals have signed up as stakeholders to receive news and event notifications. The City, through various social media outlets, has also disseminated additional information regarding the project and notifications regarding City Council discussions.
- **Business Outreach**—Since the June 22 Council meeting, project team members and City staff have met with representatives from both the Central Business Association and Chamber of Commerce to discuss how businesses can most effectively participate in the master planning process. These discussions will continue, along with additional briefings to the Downtown Committee (in November) and the Chamber of Commerce Business Issues and Public Policy (BIPP) Committee (in December).
- **Community Meeting**—A community meeting to solicit input regarding the draft Transit Center Master Plan will be held in early 2017. Meeting participants will be asked to review a conceptual master plan incorporating both the Council-preferred grade-separation alternative for Castro Street identified in June and the other Transit Center facility and service improvements discussed by the City Council at its October and November Study Sessions. Based on this input, a final conceptual master plan will be presented to the Council in spring 2017 for review and approval.
- **Partner Agency Discussions**—Several meetings have been held since the June Council meeting with stakeholder agencies with current or planned future operations at/nearby the Mountain View Transit Center, including: Caltrain, CHSRA, VTA, the Mountain View TMA, and the Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department (which is responsible for Central Expressway).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff seeks input and direction from the City Council regarding parking facility alternatives for the Mountain View Transit Center, specifically:

1. Should the Transit Center focus on only serving the parking needs of Transit Center (primarily Caltrain) users, or provide shared parking opportunities so that the facility can also help serve the parking needs of downtown workers and visitors?
2. Council input regarding the height/length, placement of the parking structure within the Transit Center site, possible ground-floor uses, and other parking structure attributes is requested so that the project team can refine the Transit Center concepts, including the parking facility and the amount and type of development (residential or commercial) that can be accommodated on, and integrated with, other transit-serving facilities and services on the site.

NEXT STEPS

Based on Council comments and direction, City staff and the consultant team will proceed with further development of the conceptual Transit Center alternatives. During this process, discussions with partner agencies (e.g., VTA, Caltrain, CHSRA, Santa Clara County) will continue. In particular, staff will continue its discussions with Caltrain to more clearly define the desired number (or range) of customer parking spaces it wants to accommodate in a parking structure at the Transit Center. Using this number as a baseline, staff can then further refine the number of spaces to be provided and other parking structure features based on the input received from the Council.

A City Council Study Session discussion of the other elements of the Transit Center improvement plan, including station platforms, bus/shuttle facilities, bicycle access and facilities, entry plaza, and other elements, is planned for November 22, 2016.

Community outreach efforts will continue as the master planning effort continues. A community meeting will be held in early 2017 and other, more focused, meetings with downtown businesses will also be conducted.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the City's standard agenda posting requirements, notices regarding this Study Session discussion were distributed to the more than 200 persons who have signed up on the project website for updates and information, previous business and/

or community meeting participants, the Old Mountain View and other nearby City neighborhood associations, and representatives of the VTA, Caltrain, Mountain View TMA, Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department, Central Business Association, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and other interested parties.

JL-LF-MAF/7/CAM

901-10-18-16SS-E