



**MEMORANDUM**

Community Development Department

**DATE:** April 24, 2019

**TO:** Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Eric Anderson, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT:** Public Draft – East Whisman Precise Plan

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**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (B/PAC) provide input on the draft of the East Whisman Precise Plan, including street design, multi-modal networks, improvement standards and guidelines, and implementation actions. The B/PAC's comments will be forwarded to the City Council for their deliberation on the Draft Precise Plan.

**BACKGROUND**

The Public Draft of the East Whisman Precise Plan was released on April 8, 2019 (Attachment 1). An Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) Study Session was held on April 17, 2019, and a City Council Study Session will be held on May 7, 2019. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) will be released in late May or early June, followed by EPC and City Council Study Sessions. Precise Plan adoption is anticipated in the fall.

The East Whisman Precise Plan will be the regulating plan for new development and public improvements for a 368-acre area, as shown on Map 1, below. The 2030 General Plan, adopted in 2012, included Change Area policies for East Whisman. In addition, preparation of a Precise Plan is a General Plan implementation action. The Precise Plan will also implement other General Plan goals and policies for the Plan area, such as improved connectivity and pedestrian/bicycle amenities, incentivizing sustainable and transit-oriented development, and encouraging use of alternative transportation through public transit and incorporation of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies.

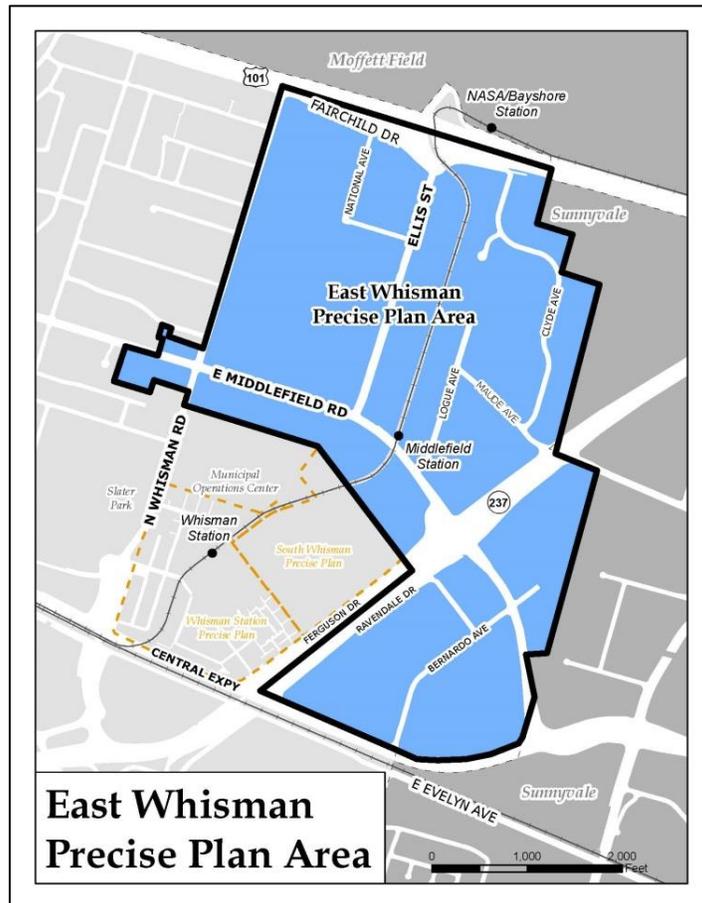
The City has been developing the Precise Plan since March 2016 and has conducted multiple workshops, stakeholder meetings, and Study Sessions since then. A summary

of previous Council direction is provided in Attachment 2. A series of key Precise Plan strategies were developed over the course of that process, including:

- Creation of a new residential neighborhood;
- Highest intensities and mix of uses near the light rail station;
- Targets and incentives for new neighborhood-serving commercial uses;
- A jobs-housing linkage strategy that will result in a balanced mix of housing and jobs over time;
- Aggressive TDM requirements on new office uses; and
- New parks, open spaces, bicycle paths, and paseos throughout the area.

These are described in greater detail on Pages 27 to 49 of the Draft Plan.

**Map 1: East Whisman Area**



## ANALYSIS

The Draft Precise Plan is organized into six chapters. The following is a summary of each chapter. The B/PAC may wish to focus on Chapters 2, 5, and 6.

1. **Chapter 1** includes background information on document organization and other resources that applicants, City staff, and other stakeholders may need to consult (such as the Zoning Ordinance, General Plan and regional plans).
2. **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the policy foundation of the Plan, including guiding principles and strategies. The Plan’s major strategies include: Character Areas, Height and FAR, Jobs-Housing Linkage, Affordable Housing, Neighborhood Commercial, Public Open Space, Schools, Streetscapes and Frontages, Multi-Modal Circulation, and TDM.
3. **Chapter 3** includes the development standards, including height, floor area, and setbacks; requirements for civic spaces, such as parks and new public streets and paths; parking and TDM requirements; and green building and bird-safe requirements.
4. **Chapter 4** includes design guidelines for buildings, frontages, open spaces, parking, and utilities.
5. **Chapter 5** includes street designs for all public streets and private, publicly accessible connections in the Plan area. It also includes standards and guidelines for the implementation of mobility and streetscape infrastructure.
6. **Chapter 6** includes Bonus FAR process and requirements, the development review process, dedication requirements, additional application materials, Plan monitoring, implementation actions, transportation/open space/utility improvements, and a funding strategy.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Measures

#### *Multi-Modal Circulation Network*

The Precise Plan includes a new Multi-Modal Circulation Network, with new bicycle paths, pedestrian paseos, streets, bicycle lanes, and cycle tracks on streets that are classified as avenues, local streets, and residential streets. A summary of the network

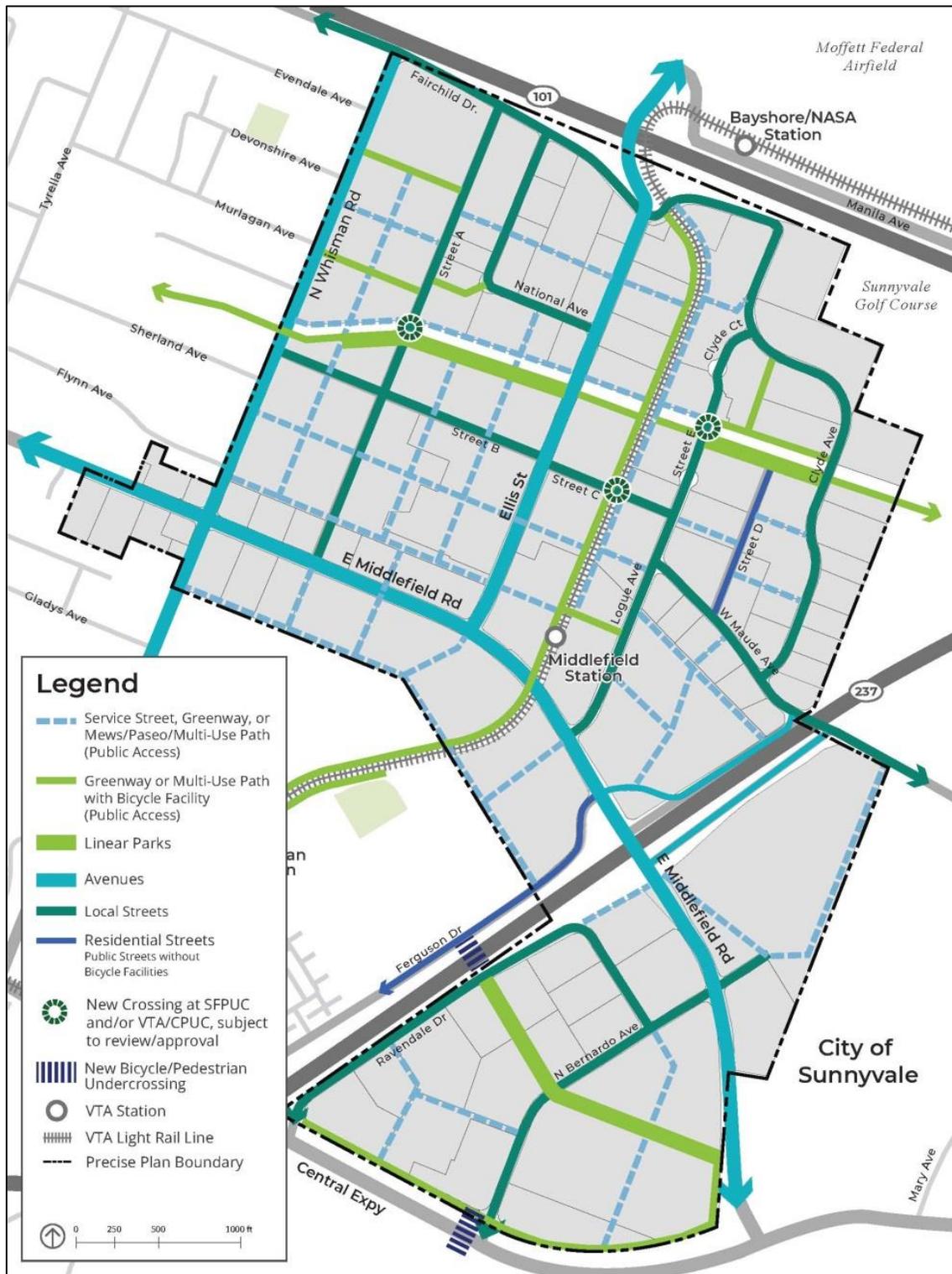
and its constituent street types is provided on Pages 44 to 47 of the Draft Precise Plan, and a more detailed description is provided in Chapter 5.

The Multi-Modal Circulation Network works in tandem with development standards in Chapter 3 (Page 78) to break up the East Whisman’s “super-blocks” into smaller blocks, 400’ to 600’ on a side.<sup>1</sup> Each block edge must be a new public street, service street, greenway, multi-use path, or paseo, and must allow public pedestrian and/or bicycle access. A conceptual map of these blocks and paths is shown in Map 2, which may be adjusted based on specific development projects’ design. This provides more connectivity for pedestrian and bicycles through the East Whisman area, and improves movement between the office and residential land uses.

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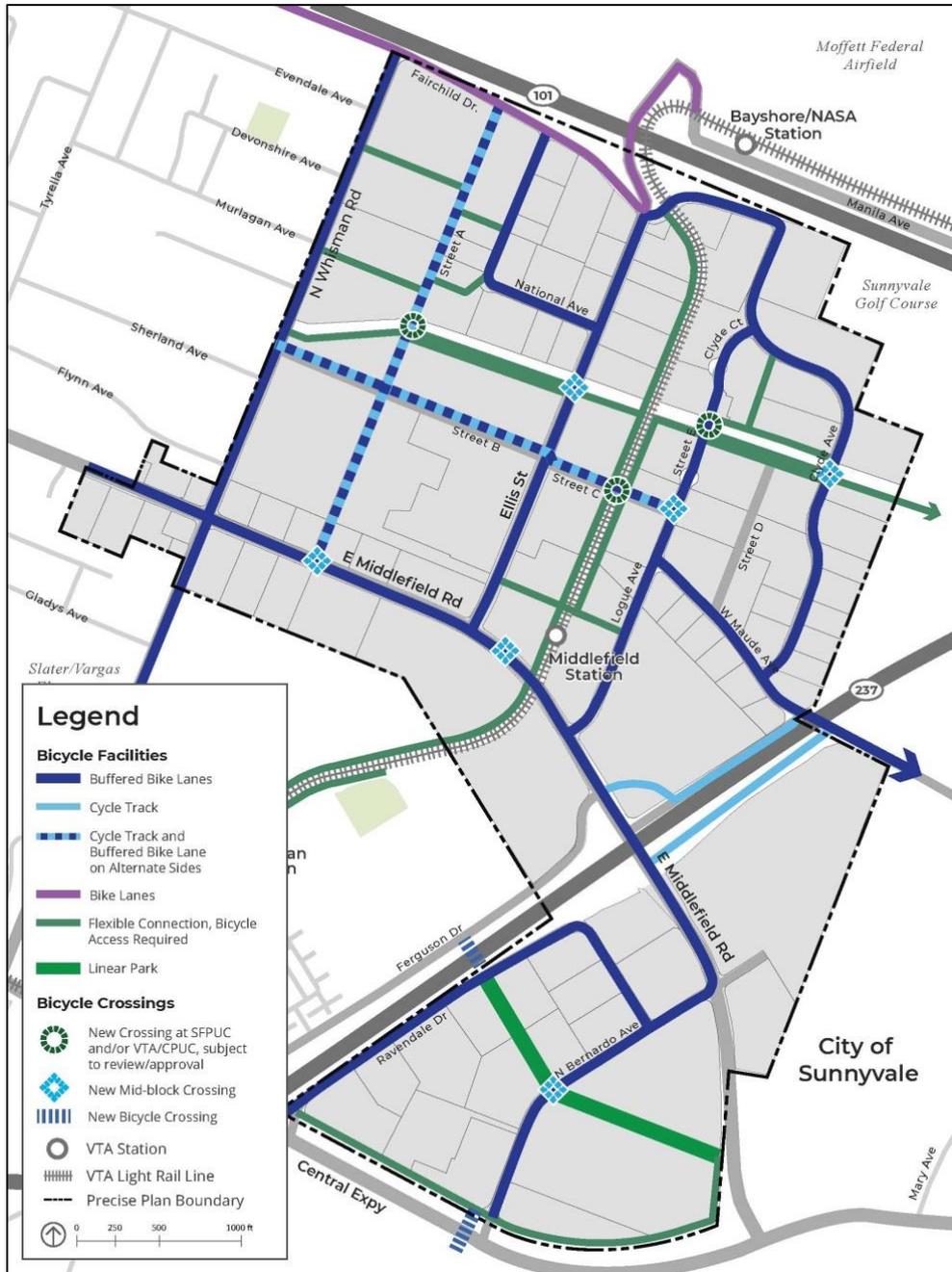
<sup>1</sup> The distance from Whisman Road to Ellis Street, one of the “super-blocks” in the area, is about 1,750’.

Map 2: Conceptual Public Circulation



A subset of the full Multi-Modal Circulation Network is the Bicycle Network (Map 3). These are routes where multi-use paths and greenways are required, to provide improved access for bicycles. Greenways are wider facilities providing separate access for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

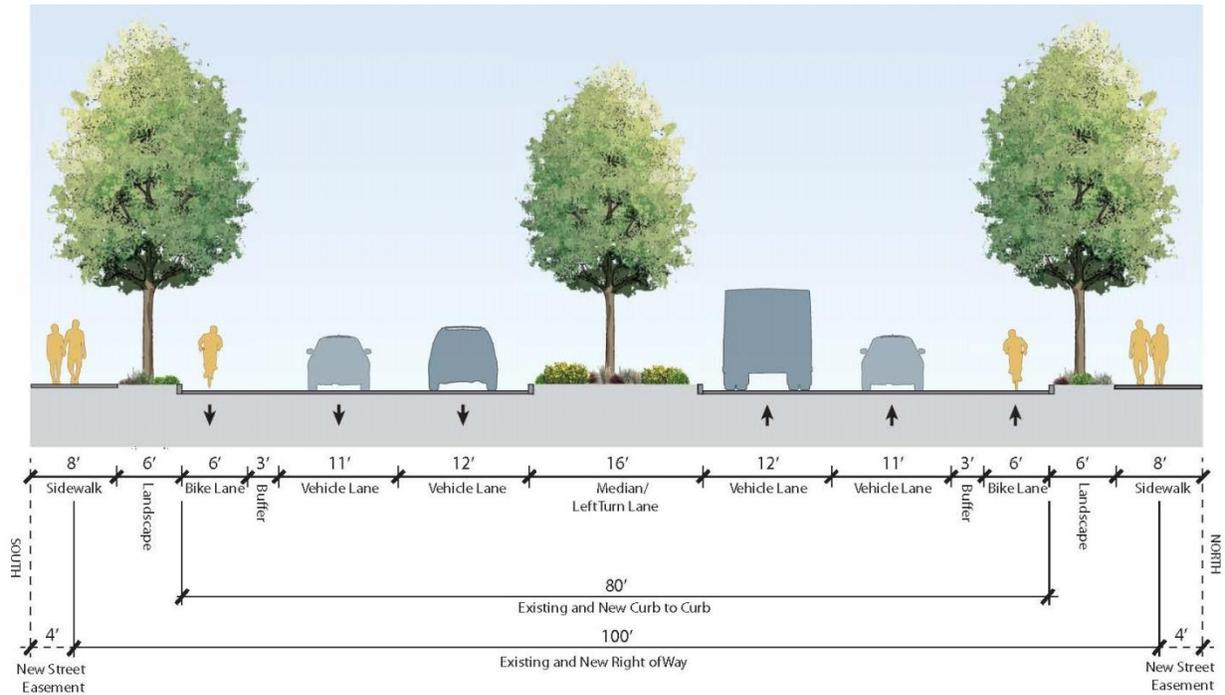
**Map 3: Bicycle Network**



### Street Design Standards

Streets in the East Whisman area have new planned sections, provided on Pages 130 to 145 of the Plan, showing new and improved facilities for low-stress bicycle travel and comfortable walking. An example of these sections is shown in Figure 1. In most cases, existing sidewalks will be widened when new development is constructed. In addition, new bicycle lanes and cycle tracks will replace some of the existing street parking. New streets are also proposed within the Plan area (as described above). Most new public streets will include bicycle lanes and/or cycle tracks as well. Some smaller streets may not include dedicated bicycle facilities but will have lower vehicle speeds and traffic, creating a comfortable mixed-flow environment.

**Figure 1: Middlefield Road Street Section**



The remainder of Chapter 5 includes detailed standards and guidelines for the design of mobility improvements and other elements of the public realm. These include Streetscape Design, Wayfinding, Transit Network and Access, Bicycle Network, and Pedestrian Network.

### *Implementation Actions*

The City actions needed to implement the Precise Plan begin on Page 180. Key actions affecting pedestrian and bicycle circulation include:

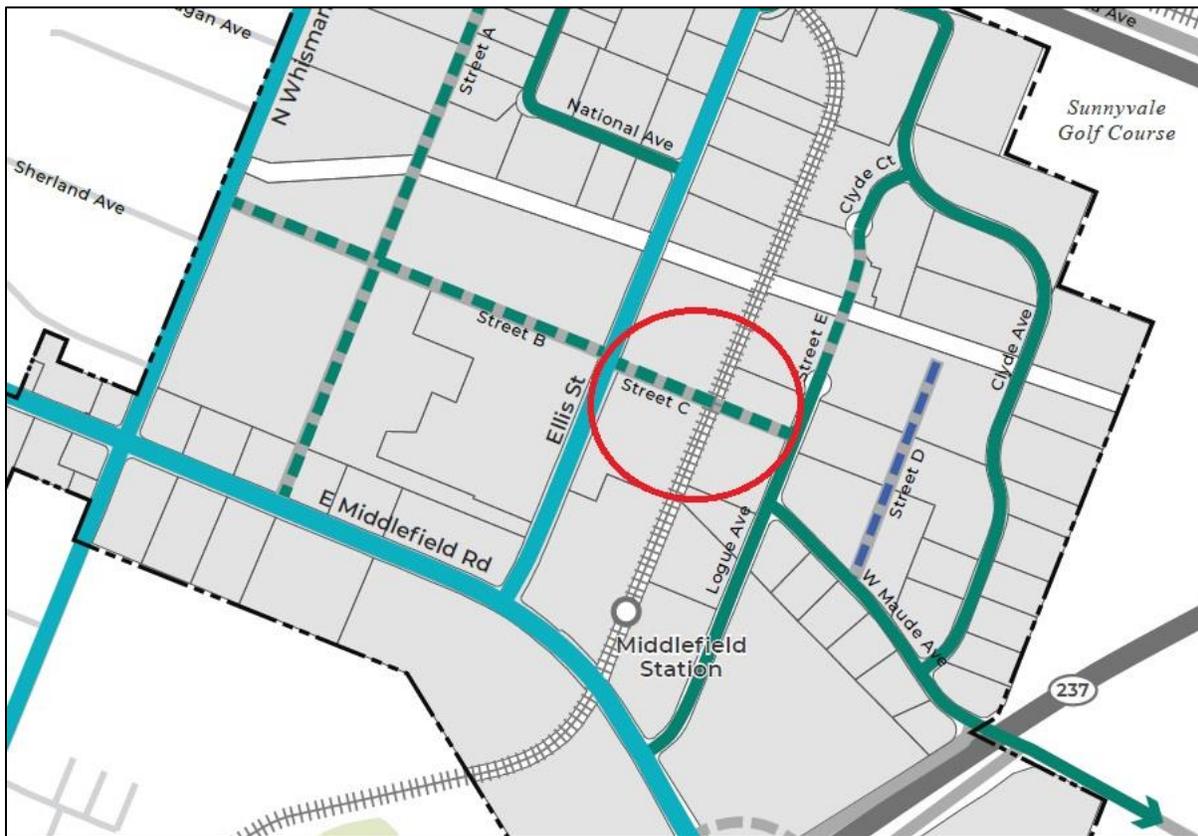
- Wayfinding, Signage, and Furnishings Program;
- Bike Share Program Expansion;
- VTA Coordination regarding infrastructure around the light rail line;
- SFPUC Coordination regarding infrastructure around their aqueduct; and
- Flex Zone (curb-side areas for loading, parking, and other uses) management.

In addition, a broad range of pedestrian and bicycle mobility improvements are described on Pages 183 to 187. These are also shown on Maps 2 and 3, above. These projects will be implemented through City capital improvement projects, through developer public benefits, or through individual development frontage requirements.

### *Outstanding Issue: New Street Across Light Rail*

The Precise Plan includes several new public streets. One proposed street, Street C, provides a key connection between the eastern and western halves of the Mixed-Use Character Area across the light rail tracks, where the existing distance between light rail crossings is currently one-half mile. In addition to increasing the frequency of connections across the light rail barrier, this street also completes a direct connection between the Hetch Hetchy trail, proposed Street B, and Maude Avenue, all of which are or could be major bicycle corridors (see Map 3).

Map 3: Street C



As planned, Street C includes vehicle lanes, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. As such, it would be impractical to grade-separate the street from the light rail, creating a new controlled crossing. However, the VTA has recently adopted a policy prohibiting new at-grade crossings of light rail. This is due to safety and operational speed concerns.

The alternative is to create a grade-separated multi-use path (an under- or overcrossing of the light rail). This could have the following benefits for pedestrians and bicycles:

- No waiting for passing trains; and
- No nearby automobiles.

However, it would also create a new hill for pedestrians and bicyclists to climb, it may create a new visual/aesthetic impact (if it is an overcrossing), and there may be additional construction costs.

If the City Council determines that the vehicle connection is not needed, for example, to address delay at other nearby intersections, they may change the Precise Plan to make

this a grade-separated multi-use path. If the City Council determines the vehicle connection is needed or desired, the City would need to work with VTA to revise its policy (or receive an exception) prior to its construction.

The B/PAC may wish to provide input on their preference for an at-grade street or a grade-separated multi-use path.

### Next Steps

#### *City Council Meetings*

The City Council will review the draft Precise Plan on May 7, 2019 and June 25, 2019. The B/PAC's comments will be provided to the City Council prior to those meetings, and the City Council will consider them during their deliberations on the draft Plan.

#### *Transportation Impact Analysis*

The Public Draft Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) will be released in late May or early June, along with the DEIR. The TIA will include an analysis of pedestrian and bicycle circulation. It will also include intersection improvements to address level of service (roadway congestion) effects of the plan, which may have a minor effect on pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure. B/PAC members are encouraged to review and comment on the TIA when it is released, but no formal B/PAC meeting will be held.

### CONCLUSION

Staff is seeking B/PAC comments on the Public Draft of the East Whisman Precise Plan, including the Multi-Modal Circulation Network, Street Design Standards, and Implementation Actions.

EA/3/CDD  
899-04-24-19M

- Attachments: 1. [East Whisman Precise Plan Public Draft](#)  
2. Summary of Prior Meetings