

Transit Center Initial Design Comments

(Sustainable San Rafael, 6/27/23)

- * *What is working well at the current transit center? What do you like about it?*
 - Seems to provide rain protection (perhaps not on windy days)
 - Distinctive design of shelters (though not great fit for character of San Rafael)
- * *What isn't working well at the current transit center? What don't you like?*
 - Lacks distinctive paving to offset pedestrian zones from bus driveways (e.g. at sidewalks)
- * *What amenities or features are desirable at the new (relocated) transit center - for transit users and other users passing through?*
 - Weather protection
 - Seating
 - Restrooms (inside building)
 - Lots of big trees
- * *What are your observations or priorities related to the following potential project principles?*
 - * *Consolidate transit center and improve bike/pedestrian safety*
 - Paving patterns to indicate priority to pedestrians
 - Clear wayfinding signage and features within the station to orient passengers to connecting buses & trains.
 - Safe and easy pedestrian access from all directions. The station is primarily a pedestrian environment.
 - Slow bicycles to accommodate pedestrian safety and comfort. "Walk bikes through transit center" signs at all crosswalks to the transit center. Bike path should be multi-use, not a bike-only throughway.
 - Connect N-S Greenway by providing a dedicated bike lane on the north side of 4th (replacing parking).
 - Clear signage/barriers to keep people and bikes off the train tracks (when intent to catch a bus or train).
 - Locate bike storage within the building (replacing & expanding the storage currently on Tamalpais).
 - * *Retain aspects of historic rail building*
 - Give primary attention to revealing original station features (not parts of the building added later).
 - The arches are the main features; consider open porticos for seating, cafes, retail.
 - Activate ground floor with transit services, cafes, other retail. (Upstairs for transit &/or other offices?)
 - Maximize size of 4th Street plaza and activate it with cafe uses spilling out of the building. Make plaza more than a circulation shortcut, while recognizing it is the main pedestrian 'gateway' from 4th.
 - Echo building's arch theme in design of bus shelters, unifying site without mimicking historic features.
 - * *Create a gateway to downtown San Rafael*
 - Treat entire transit center as an open space welcoming people downtown.
 - Lots of comfortable seating, interesting paving demarking use areas, pedestrian amenities, artwork.
 - Big trees, especially along the street edges. Large London Planes like those thriving on 5th and Tamalpais could be a thematic tree for the whole transit district, welcoming people to a city that values nature.
 - Maintain the 10' sidewalk width along Hetherton, accommodating large trees.
 - Establish strong frame for transit center with large trees east of Hetherton, south of 3rd, and north of 4th.
 - Softening site with hanging flower baskets, vertical gardens, vines covering walls, bus shelters as trellises.
 - Primary audience are passengers, but also consider views from sidewalks, cars and surrounding buildings.
 - * *Sustainability and resilience*
 - Plan for likelihood of periodic flooding from sea level rise.
 - Use and showcase sustainable materials.
 - Achieve net zero GHG emissions in design and operation of the transit center.
 - * *Are there any other thoughts you would like to share?*
 - Fit center into surrounding context. (Consult Downtown Plan and Station Area Plan for specific ideas.)
 - Solve safe pedestrian use of the Hetherton/Third intersection, especially the right turn onto Third.
 - Plant large trees along both sides of Hetherton, a simple way to block freeway noise and visibility.
 - Create safe and pleasant pedestrian connections under freeway (and integrate creek as 'gateway') feature.
 - Lease (don't sell) existing site & bond against lease revenue for additional construction costs of project.
 - Limit height & setback development on existing site to keep adequate sun on new transit center.
 - Consider additional car drop-off zones north and south along Tamalpais.
 - Dedicate ample operational funding to staff and maintain Transit Center at high level of quality.
 - See further comments on Transit Center at SSR website 'zero-emission mobility' page.