

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Goals and Objectives

In July 2008, the City of San José's Diridon Station was selected as an award recipient as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) Station Area Planning Grant Program. The purpose of the Grant Program is to fund city-sponsored planning efforts for areas around future BART stations.

The project goal is to develop a Station Area Plan around the Diridon Station Transit Center, that includes environmental clearance under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and related transit station area planning activities.

This report contains the existing conditions analysis that will serve as a background for preparing plan alternatives for the Diridon Station Area Plan. This report includes an evaluation of existing and proposed land uses market, regulatory, and infrastructure conditions. The findings will serve as a reference for analyzing the expansion of the existing Diridon Station and the development of land use regulations, implementation strategies and design guidelines to encourage appropriate transit-oriented development within the Diridon Station Area.

FIGURE I-1: DIRIDON STATION AREA IN CONTEXT



LEGEND

— Freeways

— Railways

— VTA Light Rail



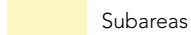
Parks



Waterways



BART Planned Alignment



Subareas



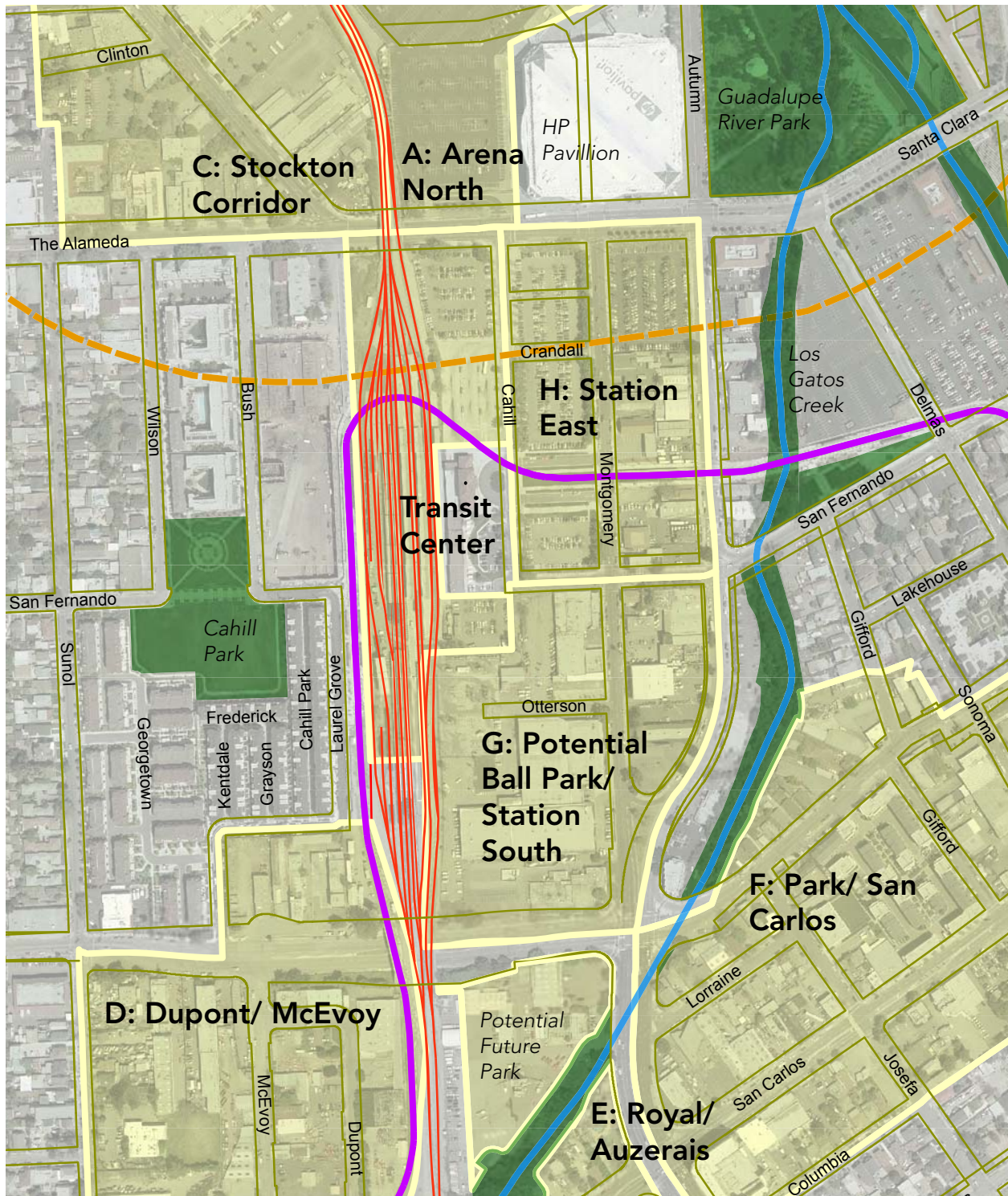
Primary project objectives include:

- establishing a land use plan and policy framework that will guide future development and redevelopment toward land uses that support transit ridership and economic development and create a world-class cultural destination;
- improving motorized, non-motorized, and transit connectivity between the station site and existing adjacent commercial and residential areas;
- developing and implementing urban design standards that promote walkable, livable, and business supportive environments within the Diridon Station Area;
- providing a variety of commercial and mixed-use development opportunities, ranging from large-scale corporate or institutional sites to incremental infill development zones;
- creating a highly active and lively pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment with excellent connectivity to downtown destinations and regional transit;
- expanding Diridon Station to create a well-integrated center of architectural and functional significance;
- enhancing the existing neighborhood and adding high-density residential-commercial mixed-use development;
- preparing a comprehensive environmental clearance document to facilitate subsequent environmental reviews of changes to existing policy/regulatory documents, capital improvement projects, and private development proposals; and,
- educating and informing the public about the area planning process and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) concepts.

The Diridon Station Transit Center is located along the Union Pacific/Caltrain/Amtrak/Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) right-of-way.

The Transit Center, already a major transit hub, will emerge as one of the premier multimodal stations in the Bay Area as a station of the proposed BART extension to Silicon Valley and the proposed California High Speed Rail (HSR) to San Francisco to the north and Los Angeles to the south.

FIGURE I-2: DIRIDON STATION AREA



LEGEND

- Freeways
- Railways
- VTA Light Rail
- Parks
- Waterways
- BART Planned Alignment
- Subareas



1.2 Planning Process and Schedule

The Diridon Station Area Plan was initiated on June 2, 2009, upon the San José City Council's action to accept an MTC Station Area Planning Grant and approve a consultant contract. It is envisioned to be a two-year process that will be completed by June 2011. The City of San José is the lead agency for completing the primary project objectives (described on page 1-3), and has agreed to coordinate the planning effort with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). Throughout the study, extensive efforts will be made to engage members of the business and development community, as well as residents within the immediate area and surrounding long-established neighborhoods. The surrounding areas have neighborhood associations with a history of active participation in both City and private development proposals and activities. Many of these associations have been supportive of improving transit and pedestrian access and circulation, but remain focused on ensuring that future new development within their neighborhoods enhances the area's amenities and does not detract from their quality of life.

The final Diridon Station Area Plan is anticipated to be heard at a public hearing by the San José City Council in 2011. If the City Council adopts the final Station Area Plan, City staff and the consultant team will prepare General Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments as necessary to provide a policy framework for the plan's implementation. This will enable the City and the Redevelopment Agency to market the redevelopment of the Diridon Station Area. Zoning Ordinance amendments (not included in this project scope of work) may incorporate form-based zoning concepts as needed to regulate physical form related to standards for building envelopes, architecture, and streets in a clearly written plan.

1.3 Report Organization

This report organizes the existing conditions analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of opportunities and challenges, which serve as a background for preparing plan scenarios.

Chapter 2 includes a review of existing planning documents, including land use policy, property ownership and development projects, historical designations, the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Improvement Plans, environment and sustainability plans (including the Green Vision), public facilities, and planning documents related to specific sites within the study area. An inventory of land use designations, historic designations, publicly owned properties, and opportunity sites is included in this chapter.

Chapter 3 summarizes the City of San Jose's height and noise constraints on the Planning Area.

Chapter 4 assesses key environmental factors by mapping geology, biological resources, archeological resources, noise, and air quality affecting the Planning Area. All of these aspects will be studied in greater detail during the Environmental Impact Analysis phase of the project.

Chapter 5 identifies access routes by all modes (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles, and private automobiles) and accessibility to the transit center.

Chapter 6 reviews the existing and planned transit services associated with Diridon Station including Caltrain, Amtrak, freight services, future high speed rail, Altamont Commuter Express ("ACE"), VTA, and other bus operators.

Chapter 7 assesses parking conditions in the Diridon Station Area, including both dedicated station parking facilities and station overflow parking. This chapter presents an inventory of current parking facilities in the Planning Area.

Chapter 8 includes a review of existing infrastructure capacity. It assesses the condition and capability of storm, sanitary, and recycled water for systems within and connecting to the development area.

Chapter 9 presents the Market Demand Analysis that focuses on development opportunities in the long term. This time frame is consistent with the City's projections for their Envision 2040 Plan. The market analysis (1) addresses regional economic growth and demand forecast for all of Santa Clara County, (2) includes a targeted market analysis addressing transit-supportive joint development opportunities within the Planning Area, and (3) suggests a preliminary development program.

Appendix A includes information gathered through the Stakeholder Outreach, which includes a summary of interviews with City and Agency staff and officials, transit agencies and public comment and feedback from Community Workshop #1.

Appendix B covers other relevant documents, such as the Harvard Study Program and the Public Art Program. A summary of ideas generated by students from the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) Studio (Spring 2009) explored "New Ways" to integrate public art and shape urban form. Appendix B also includes a review of the City's Public Art Program as applicable to the station study areas will inform the development of an integrated program of public art in the Diridon Station Area plan.