



March 31, 2017

City of San Jose
Department of Planning and Building
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Attention: Reema Mahamood

Subject: City File No. H16-024 / Museum Place Mixed Use

Dear Ms. Mahamood:

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) staff have reviewed the Supplemental Draft EIR for 306 residential units, 183 hotel rooms, 209,395 square feet of office use, 14,116 square feet of retail, and 60,475 square feet of additional museum space at 180 Park Avenue. We have the following comments.

Land Use

VTA strongly supports the proposed land use intensification of this site, strategically located in Downtown San Jose, within short walking distance of VTA Light Rail Transit and Local Bus lines 55, 63, 64, 65, 81, 86, Express Bus line 181, and the Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH) Bus Rapid Transit. The Diridon Station is also within approximately ½-mile of the site, and is served by Caltrain, Altamont Corridor Express (ACE), Capitol Corridor, and VTA Light Rail Transit (LRT), as well as the future BART extension to Silicon Valley and California High Speed Rail services. Additionally, by increasing residential, hotel, office, and cultural uses within close proximity to the numerous shops, restaurants, services and work sites in Downtown San Jose, the project will increase opportunities for daily tasks to be accomplished by walking and biking, thereby incrementally reducing automobile trips and greenhouse gas emissions.

Downtown San Jose is identified as a Regional Core in VTA's Community Design & Transportation (CDT) Program Cores, Corridors and Station Areas framework, which shows VTA and local jurisdiction priorities for supporting concentrated development in the County. The CDT Program was developed through an extensive community outreach strategy in partnership with VTA Member Agencies, and was endorsed by all 15 Santa Clara County cities and the County.

Pedestrian Accommodations – Project Frontage

The Site Plan contained in the Draft SEIR/Traffic Operations Analysis contains minimal details regarding project frontage's pedestrian accommodations. However, VTA notes that the previous draft site plan ("Architectural Site Plan" by Steinberg Architects, revised date 9/6/16) provided

by City staff during our review of the NOP reflected a project frontage consisting of a 15-foot wide sidewalk buffered along the roadside with street trees; the other half consisted of a buffered drop-off area and curb cut providing auto access to the parking garage. VTA supports such conditions, and recommends that they be provided as Conditions of Approval. Resources on pedestrian quality of service, such as the Highway Capacity Manual 2010 Pedestrian Level of Service methodology, indicate that a buffer strip with street trees placed between pedestrians and automobiles improves pedestrian perceptions of comfort and safety on a roadway.

VTA encourages the City to work with the project applicant to reduce potential safety conflicts for pedestrians and bicyclists where the project driveway crosses the sidewalk by minimizing the width of the project driveway/curb cut, reducing the speed of right turns, and providing other safety features, such as high-visibility crosswalks, special pavement, or low bollards. Improved pedestrian accommodations along the project frontage would encourage greater trips by walking, and improve access to transit.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Accommodations –Midblock Crossing and Intersection Improvements

VTA commends the City and project applicant for proposing improvements to the Park Avenue/Almaden Boulevard and Park Avenue/Market Street intersections, and an enhanced midblock crossing of Park Avenue, as shown in Figure 9 Park Avenue Plan Line (TOA, p. 19). The intersection improvements effectively eliminate free right-hand turns, and reduce crossing distances for pedestrians, which will provide improved safety and comfort for pedestrians. VTA notes that the bus stop on the east side of Almaden Boulevard at Park Avenue could be affected by the proposed improvements at this intersection. Please coordinate with VTA on the design and operation of the northeast corner of the intersection in order to ensure that the design does not adversely affect the bus stop facility or bus operations.

Currently a bike lane exists along Park Avenue, and is immediately accessible from the site. The Park Avenue Plan Line diagram also shows the bike lane coincident with the passenger loading/freight loading zone. VTA notes that the diagram shows a dashed bike lane along the portion of the frontage occupied by the freight loading zone, however, it is not extended along the portion occupied by the passenger-drop off area. Given that the bike lane and passenger drop-off/freight loading zones are effectively a shared-use zone for vehicles and bicyclists, VTA recommends that the City reduce potential safety conflicts by minimizing the length of the drop-off portion, and providing additional safety features. At a minimum, the dashed bike lane should be extended further east to include the passenger-drop off area. Other safety features could include a raised shared-use area or special pavement within the shared-use zone to encourage yields.

Pedestrian Accommodations - Site Circulation

VTA applauds the project sponsor for improving the east-west 20-foot wide pedestrian paseo connecting Park Avenue and West San Carlos Street. The site plan shows the Park Avenue paseo

frontage improved from a curb cut/driveway access to a pedestrian-only/ADA access, and active retail uses and building entrances facing the paseo. Such site treatment creates an interesting and varying cityscape for pedestrians that is safe and visible from public streets, thereby encouraging trips by walking.

Bicycle Accommodations – Bicycle Parking

VTA supports cycling as an important transportation mode, and thus supports the project's inclusion of 132 bicycle parking spaces, which is consistent with the City of San Jose's bicycle parking requirements. VTA also concurs with the TOA's recommendation to provide on-site bicycle parking that exceeds the City's requirements. Bicycle parking facilities can include bicycle lockers or secure indoor parking for all-day storage and bicycle racks for short-term parking. VTA's Bicycle Technical Guidelines provide guidance for estimating supply, siting and design for bicycle parking facilities. This document may be downloaded from www.vta.org/bikeprogram.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) & Trip Reduction

VTA recommends that the City and project sponsor consider a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for this project. VTA notes that such programs can be more effective when they include a vehicle trip reduction target, third-party monitoring of trip generation upon project completion and a Lead Agency enforcement/penalty structure. Effective TDM programs that may be applicable to the Project include:

- * Parking pricing and parking cash-out programs
- * Public-private partnerships or contributions to improved transit service to the area
- * Transit fare incentives such as free or discounted transit passes on a continuing basis
- * Bicycle lockers and bicycle racks
- * Showers and clothes lockers for bicycle commuters
- * Preferentially located carpool parking
- * Employee carpool matching services
- * Parking for car-sharing vehicles

Bus Stop Improvements

VTA is working on bus stop and shelter upgrades to support the Rapid Transit project on Stevens Creek Boulevard and W. San Carlos Street. Route 323 will be upgraded to Rapid 523 as part of the 2017 Service Change. The improvements are in the final design phase and will be constructed by the end of 2017. This project will generate transit demand on the bus routes on San Carlos Street. VTA recommends that this project contribute to the bus stop and shelter upgrades at the eastbound and westbound Convention Center stops on W. San Carlos Street.

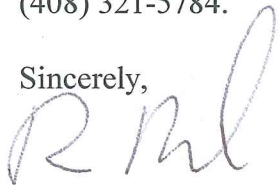
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VTA's Transit Passenger Environment Plan provides design guidelines for bus stops. VTA's Bus Stop & Passenger Facilities Standards provides bus stop specifications. Both documents can be downloaded at <http://www.vta.org/tpep>.

VTA has a Bus Stop Placement, Closures and Relocations Policy. Prior to any construction or bus stop impact, please contact bus.stop@vta.org.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. If you have any questions, please call me at (408) 321-5784.

Sincerely,



Roy Molseed
Senior Environmental Planner

cc: Michael Liw, San Jose Development Services
Patricia Maurice, Caltrans
Brian Ashurst, Caltrans

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