

June 20, 2019

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)
3331 N. 1st Street
San Jose, CA 95134

Re: Item 7.2 – Receive an update on Diridon Station Area Concept Plan.

Dear Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Board:

The Diridon Integrated Station Concept (DISC) plan is the first step towards joint-planning and delivery of the San Jose Central Station, a great urban train station and the gateway to the Bay Area.

We believe that in order for people to embrace transit, the station and the district, the user experience must be a central focus in the planning process. If we don't get the user experience right:

- the multimodal hub's infrastructure will not move as many people as it could,
- overall ridership will continue to decline in San Jose and across the county transit network,
- traffic will overwhelm the streets in the station area, downtown San Jose and beyond, and
- San Jose will not realize its potential to significantly grow employment close to transit.

In 2018, SPUR launched the Regional Strategy, an aspirational civic vision for the Bay Area for the next half century and policy roadmap to achieve it. As part of this, SPUR is developing a mega-regional rail strategy that builds off the vision in the 2018 State Rail Plan which intends to integrate the rail services statewide, creates a seamless network and advances a strategy for sustainable regional growth. Multimodal hubs are critical structural and strategical components of this strategy.

We recommend that the partner agencies evaluate the proposed elements of the multimodal hub through the lens of **user experience**. User experience is what people will feel, what action they will be inspired to take, and what memory they are left with as they see, hear, smell, walk through or pass by the station and the area around it.

User experience is critical to whether people will embrace the station — be it to take a transit trip, meet with friends in the station area, or live or work in downtown San Jose. **The success of the station as a regional and statewide mobility hub, bringing passengers to San Jose and taking them to points beyond, will have implications at the local and megaregional level.** And the user's experience has big implications.

As such, outlined below are three central questions to help guide your inquiry about the spatial aspects under consideration.

1) How will the station's design influence the way people move across the region?

If transit services are going to compete with the automobile or the next big transportation technology, the spatial configuration of the station should:

- Be based on a unified vision set forth by both the public agencies and private developers that maximizes the long-term capacity of the transit network and facilitates ridership on that network.
- Ensure local transit services will seamlessly feed the rail network with riders and can increase their capacity over time.

2) How will people get from the surrounding neighborhoods to and through the station?

New growth should be concentrated around the station to take advantage of unparalleled accessibility. In order to accommodate the volume of people expected, considering access to and through the station from all directions is paramount.

The following decisions could significantly influence these outcomes:

- Prioritize access to the station for people who walk or bike.
- Design connections between the streets that make it easier for people to walk and bike continuously.
- Allocate ample space to bike and shared micro-mobility services.
- Dedicate curb space to drop offs in a way that does not compromise the experience of people walking and biking in and around the station.
- Do not allocate space for park and ride lots at the multimodal hub; instead, develop a plan for a shared-parking facility in the district.

3) How will people use the multimodal hub?

Creating a great experience for people who use the multimodal hub will be the result of multiple choices:

- Limit the distance and time needed for people to connect between rail and transit.
- Allocate and design space for public amenities— waiting areas, restrooms, engaging furniture—for people of all ages and travelling in/through the hub for different purposes
- Ensure clear and intuitive wayfinding to the transit services that will get people to their desired destination.

Through the DISC process, we must ensure we are making it as easy as possible for people to choose public transit as their first option. That means facilitating easy intuitive access to, through and within the multimodal hub. We also want to get the greatest return on public investments by maximizing the number of people who will use the transit services and other amenities offered. only Viewing these decisions through a user experience lens will help to ensure high-quality, effective services and enthusiastic adoption.

Thank you for considering this perspective on station and station area planning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Soultanov', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nicole Soultanov
San Jose Project Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa Alvarado', with a stylized, cursive script.

Teresa Alvarado
San Jose Director