



DATE: April 22, 2021

TO: Transportation Authority of Marin Board of Commissioners

FROM: Anne Richman, Executive Director *Anne Richman*
Bill Whitney, Principal Project Delivery Manager

SUBJECT: San Rafael Transportation Center Relocation Update (Discussion), Agenda Item No. 7

RECOMMENDATION

Discussion item only, no action needed. Staff from the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD) will provide a project update on the San Rafael Transportation Center (SRTC) relocation and hear any comments/input the Board may have to offer.

BACKGROUND

The SRTC, also known as the Bettini Transportation Center, is owned and operated by GGBHTD. The facility was opened in 1992 and has operated as the major transit hub in Marin County providing high quality bus transit service to the residents of Marin and beyond.

When the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit District (SMART) extended its passenger rail service south from the San Rafael Station to the Larkspur Station, the rail line impacted the operational capacity of the facility and passenger movements. The significant reduction of the facility's effectiveness to provide transit service made the relocation of the current SRTC necessary.

DISCUSSION

The District initiated an effort to investigate alternative locations in the City of San Rafael that could provide an improved level of service for transit users. Several locations are under consideration and will be summarized in the presentation.

TAM has been involved in the planning process for several years, by participating in various partnership groups to develop and consider alternatives, and by providing financial support for preliminary engineering and environmental clearance in the amount of \$1.25 million. Additionally, Regional Measure 3 (RM3) provides \$30 million for the SRTC relocation project, with GGBHTD as the project sponsor. According to RM3, "The selected alternative shall be approved by the City of San Rafael, the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, the Transportation Authority of Marin, and Marin Transit." The statute does not specify the form or timing of the approval and TAM staff will be working with partners to define this. RM3 is still held up in litigation at this time.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Not applicable at this time.

NEXT STEPS

The District is currently preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and will release it for public comment in the coming months. The DEIR is expected to recommend a preferred alternative for the SRTC relocation. Following the comment period, GGBHTD would then finalize the EIR, and pursue further project development activities such as project design, permitting, funding etc.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Presentation from the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District



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Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design

Transportation Authority of Marin Board of Commissioners

April 22, 2021



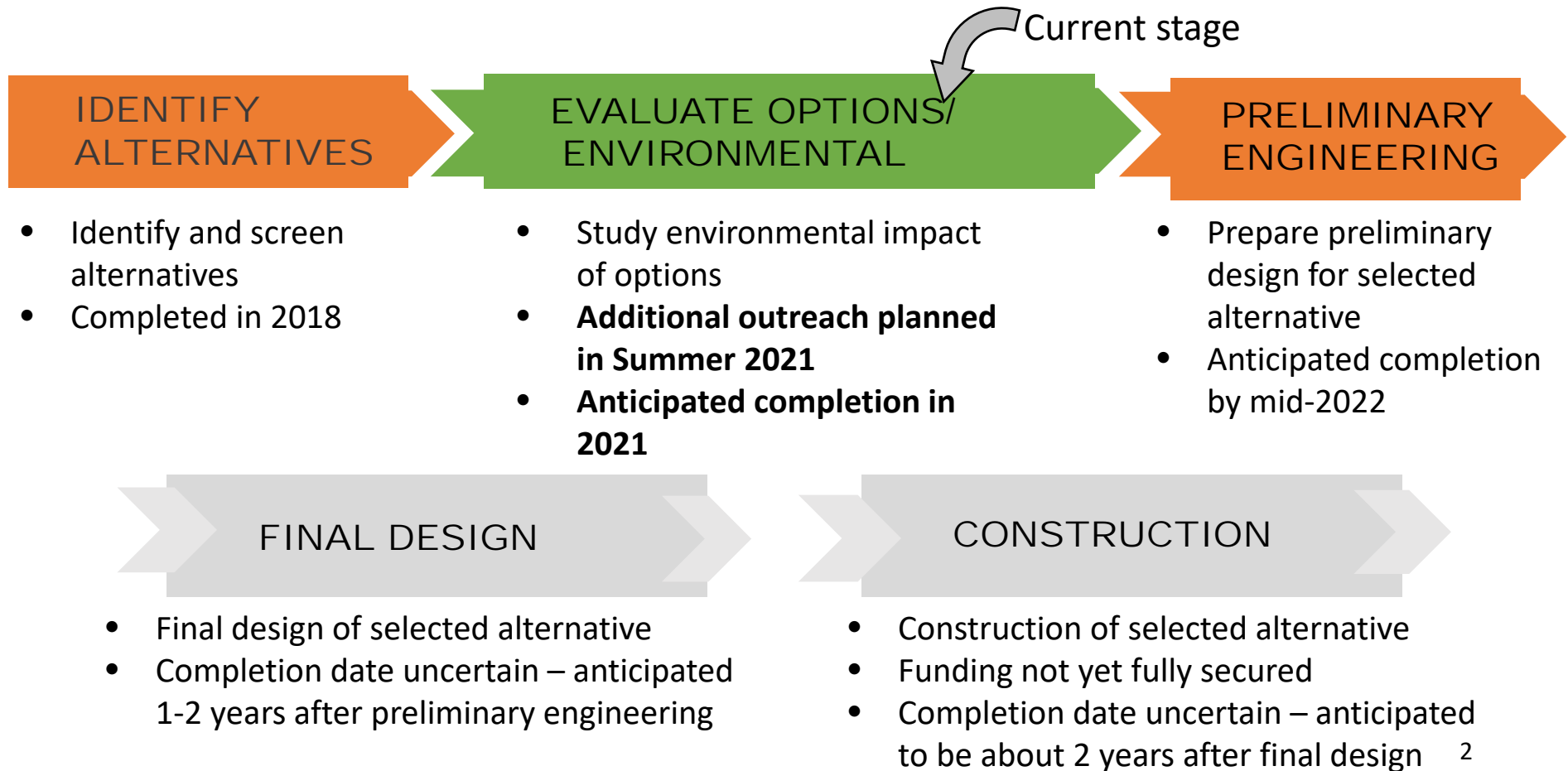
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Timeline to Project Opening: anticipated 4-7 years from now

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Process for Selection of a Preferred Alternative

We are here





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Desired Elements of the Proposed Transit Center

- 17 bus bays
 - Same capacity as current transit center, fully utilized at peak times (even during pandemic)
- Existing SMART Station
- Security
- Clipper machines
- Covered waiting areas and passenger seating
- Bike parking
- Green (LEED) treatments
- Wayfinding
- Customer service and transit information
- Lighting
- Landscaping and public spaces
- Ancillary retail space
- Maintenance parking
- Pick-up/Drop-off space
- Taxi/TNC and shuttle space
- Driver relief facilities
- Public restrooms
- Consideration for Consideration for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies



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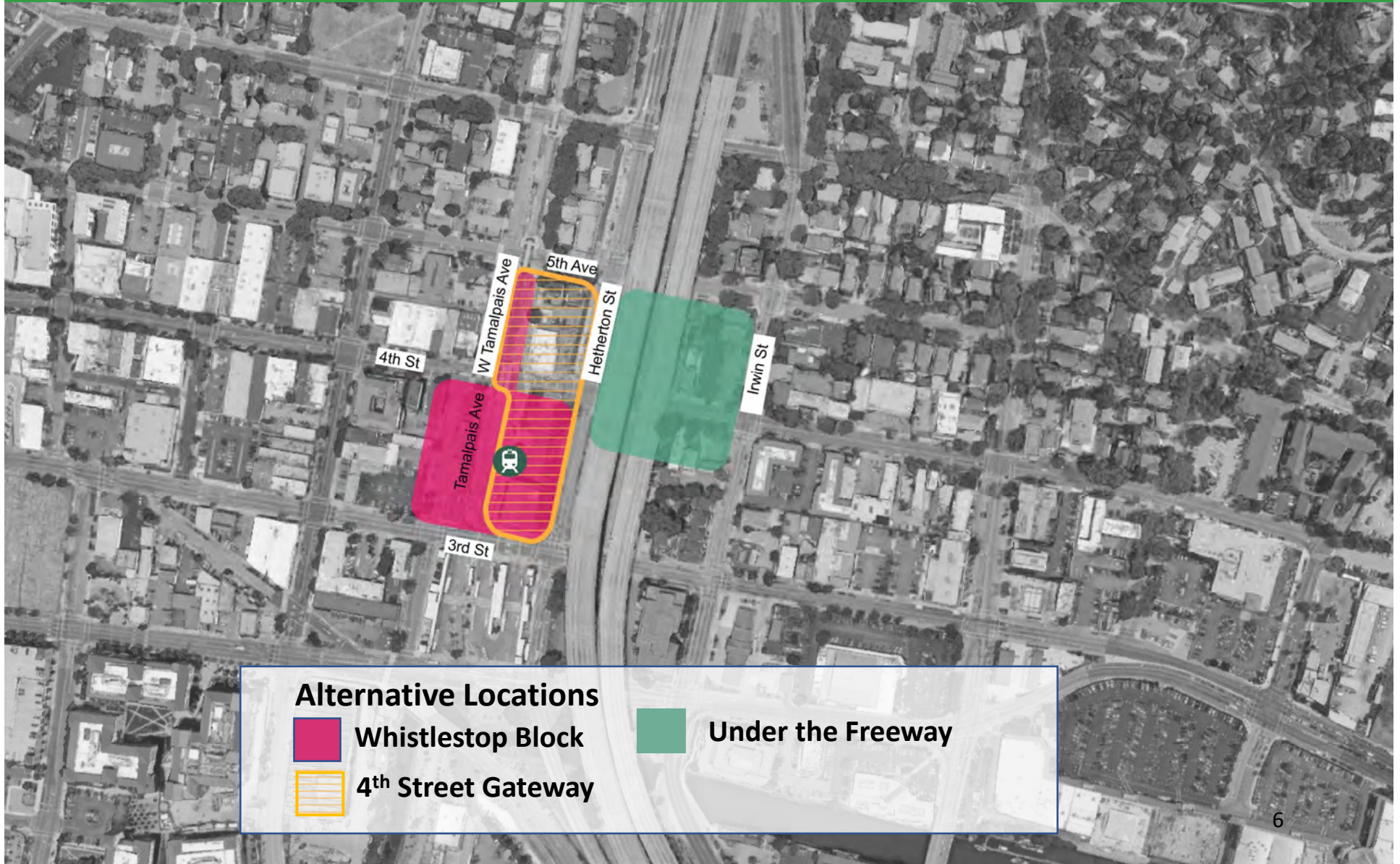
All Build Alternatives Provide ...

- Improved accessibility for bus routes, reducing the amount of circulation on local streets necessary for buses to access their bays, benefiting traffic and making transit more efficient and reliable
- Operational flexibility to allow for future potential expansion of transit service and schedules
- Shift of buses from busy 2nd/3rd Streets, improving traffic flow
- New transit center facilities, including enlarged customer service, new shelters, integration of technology, green treatments (LEED), improved waiting areas
- Flexible curb for microtransit, shuttles, TNCs, taxis, pick-up/drop-off



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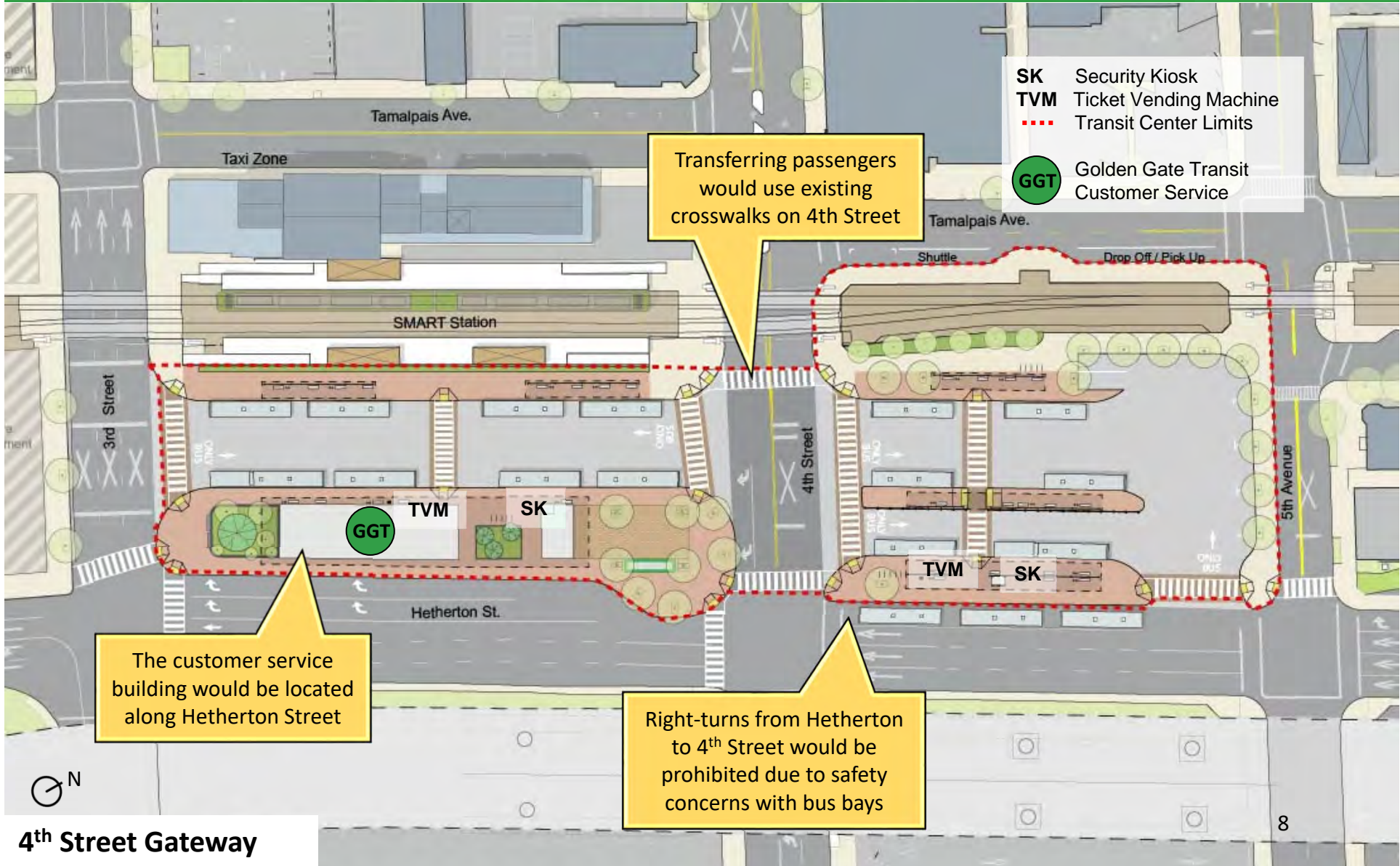


4th Street Gateway Alternative



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Passenger Experience

- Provides convenient access to downtown San Rafael for transit users
- Some people transferring between buses would have to cross 4th Street
- Convenient connection to SMART
- Creates a better sense of place with public plaza, aesthetic treatments, and clear lines of sight



4th Street Gateway



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Summary of Effects

- Transit travel time may increase in future relative to no-build due to congestion
- May make sidewalks on 4th Street less comfortable due to additional driveways
- Opportunities for plazas and other public spaces along 4th Street
- Potentially historic resources impacted
- Estimated total cost of construction, property acquisition, and relocation (2023 dollars): **\$40M-\$55M**



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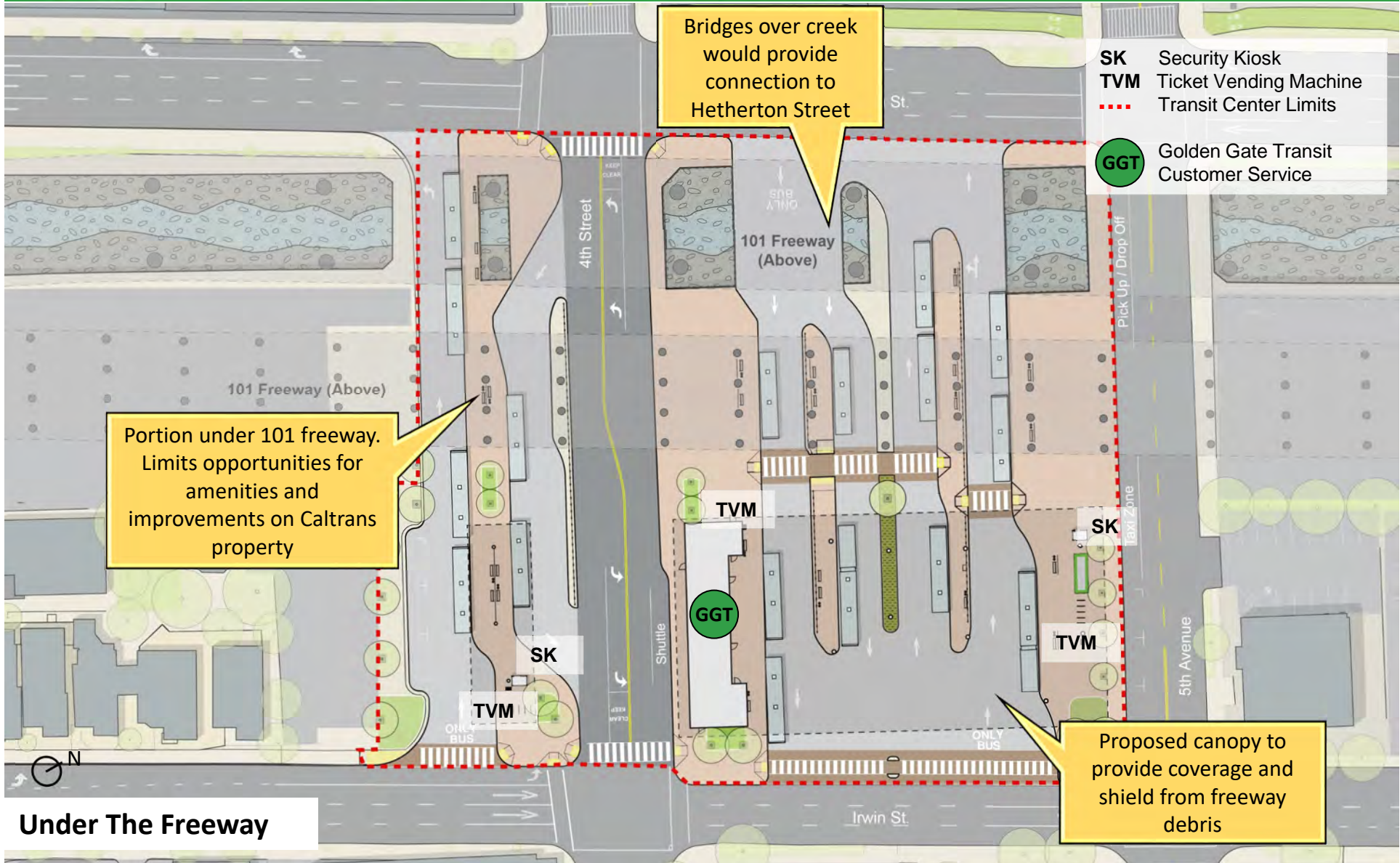


Under the Freeway Alternative



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- SK** Security Kiosk
- TVM** Ticket Vending Machine
- Transit Center Limits
- GGT** Golden Gate Transit Customer Service

Under The Freeway



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Passenger Experience

- Visibility and sight lines would be partially blocked by freeway support columns; visibility is key for creating a safe and welcoming environment for passengers.
- The portions of the transit center under the freeway will not be allowed to have any permanent structures, such as bus shelters, due to Caltrans policy
- All passengers going to or from SMART would have to cross Hetherton Street and many would also have to cross 4th Street
- Some people transferring between buses would have to cross 4th Street



Under The Freeway





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Summary of Effects

- Moderate to significant benefits for transit travel time and reliability
- The space underneath the freeway is currently used as a Caltrans Park-and-Ride lot; at least 72 spaces would be impacted and would be required to be replaced 1-for-1 by Caltrans
- GGT limited to a ground lease of the property and will not be able to acquire ownership of the Caltrans portion. Caltrans will retain the right to evict Golden Gate Transit without compensation if repairs are necessary to US 101
- Potentially historic resources impacted
- Environmental impacts to Irwin Creek and additional permits required
- Estimated cost of construction, property acquisition, mitigation, and relocation (2023 dollars): **\$60M-\$85M**



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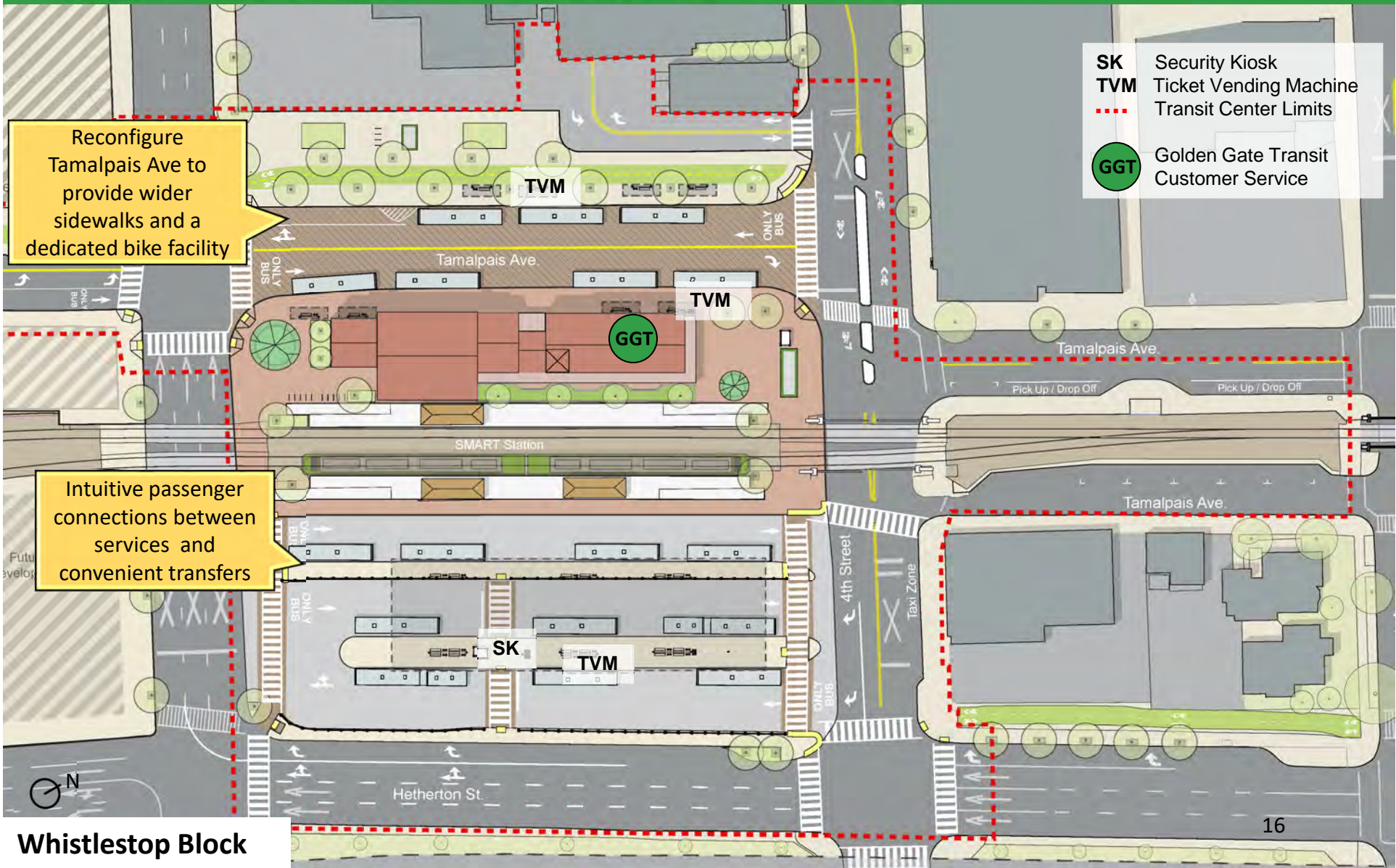


Whistlestop Block Alternative (and Relocate Whistlestop Variant)



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Passenger Experience

- Does not require passengers to cross any auto streets for either transfers between buses or transfers between buses and SMART
- Creates a cohesive transit identity and simplifies wayfinding for transit users
- Creates a better sense of place with public plaza, aesthetic treatments, and clear lines of sight
- Effects on visibility across the site depend on the location of the portion Whistlestop Building that would be retained



Whistlestop Block



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Summary of Effects

- Most significant benefits to transit travel time and reliability
- Constructs a connection between the Puerto Suello and the Mahon Creek paths
- Impacts the fewest number of active businesses of the Build alternatives
- New driveways for buses along the south side of 4th Street between Hetherton Street and the SMART tracks
- Implements a key component of the Station Area Plan – public plaza north of the Whistlestop Building along 4th Street
- Estimated cost of construction, property acquisition, and relocation (2023 dollars): **\$40M-\$55M**



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Relocate Whistlestop Variant

- Sub-alternative to the Whistlestop Block Alternative has the same configuration east of the SMART tracks, but flips the location of the Whistlestop building and Tamalpais Avenue west of the tracks

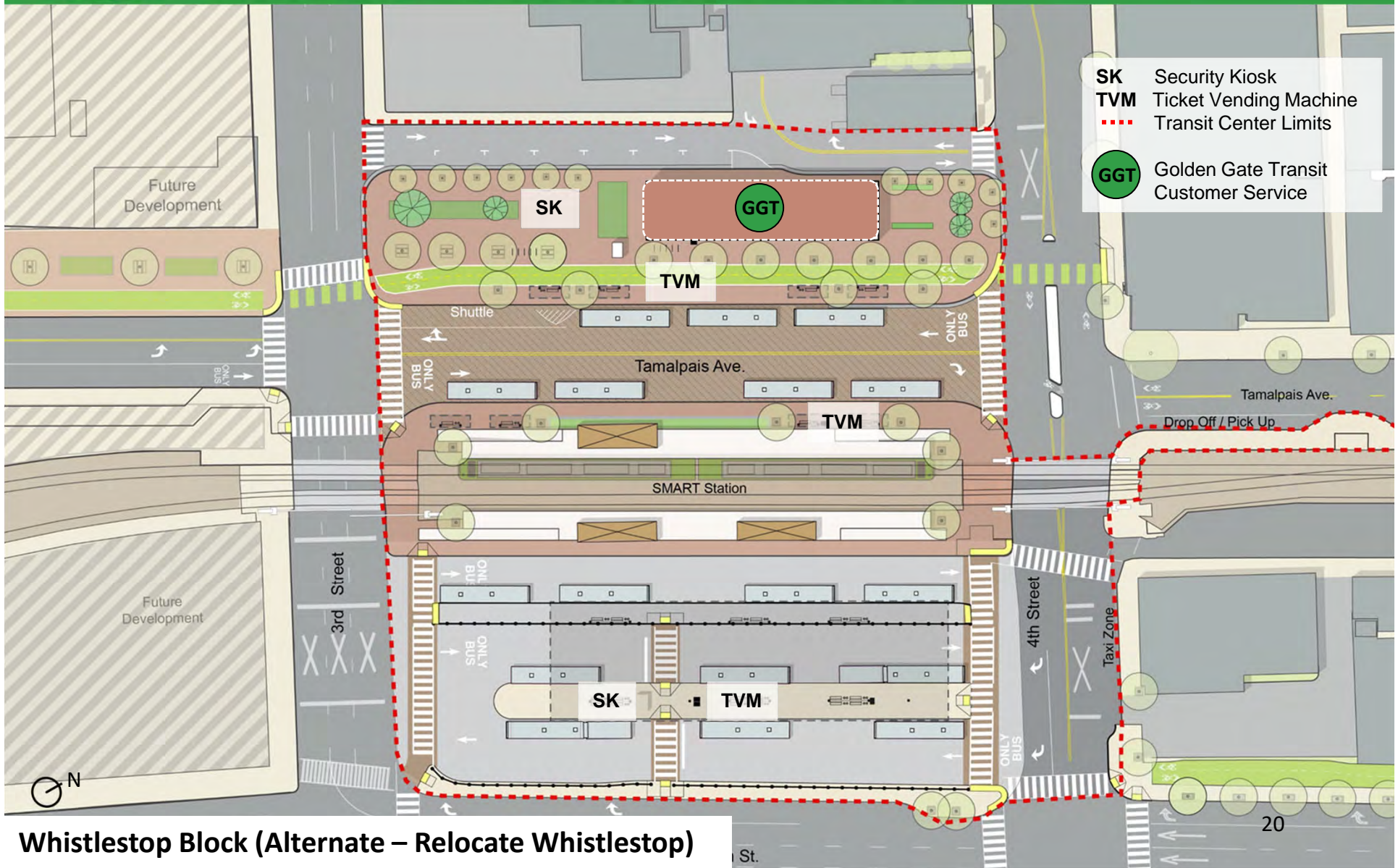


Whistlestop Block (Alternate – Relocate Whistlestop)



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Whistlestop Block (Alternate – Relocate Whistlestop)



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Relocate Whistlestop Variant Considerations

- Better aligns Tamalpais Avenue between 2nd and 4th Streets with segments to the north and south, creating a more direct north-south bicycle and pedestrian route and improving the view corridor
- Removes the visual barrier of the Whistlestop building in order to improve line-of-sight and more directly locates bus bays and rail platforms together
- Allows the relocated Whistlestop Building to serve as a visual transition from the transportation uses west of 101 to the downtown core of San Rafael.
- Same project footprint
- Estimated cost of construction, property acquisition, and relocation (2023 dollars): **\$40M-\$60M**



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Summary of Key Considerations

- Capital Cost
 - 4th Street Gateway: **\$40M - \$55M**
 - Under the Freeway: **\$60M - \$85M**
 - Whistlestop Block: **\$40M - \$55M**
 - Relocate Whistlestop: **\$40M - \$60M**
- Relationship to Existing Uses
 - 4th Street Gateway: approx. 8 existing businesses
 - Under the Freeway: approx. 4 existing businesses plus Caltrans park-and-ride impacts, requiring replacement
 - Whistlestop Block: approx. 2 existing businesses (excluding Whistlestop)
- Environmental Considerations
 - 4th Street Gateway: Impact to potential historical resources
 - Under the Freeway: Irwin Creek Impacts, waterway & habitat, potential historical resource on Irwin Street



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Recent Outreach Activities



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Community Outreach Process

- Five phases of public engagement
 1. Listening (March 2018 Open House & Survey)
 2. Input on Specific Concepts (June 2018 Open House, Canal Outreach, Survey)
 3. Scoping for Environmental Analysis (October 2018 Meeting)
 4. **Project Update/Review of Alternatives (November 2020)**
 5. Review Findings of Environmental Analysis (anticipated Summer 2021)



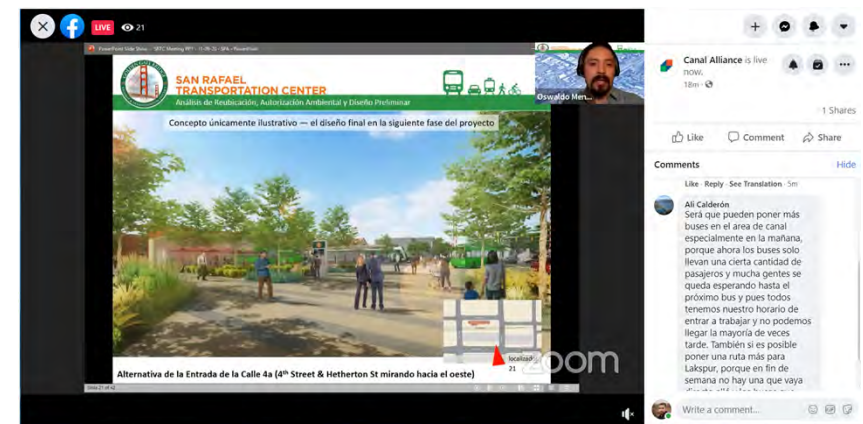
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Recent Public Outreach Activities

- Partnership with the Canal Alliance
 - Hosted a Facebook Live event in Spanish on Nov 9 (4,800 views)
 - Conducted 32 hours of bi-lingual outreach activities at the Transit Center and Food Pantry
- Community Meeting via Zoom
 - 50 attendees plus over 120 additional online views





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Recent Public Outreach Activities (cont.)

- Outreach to businesses through San Rafael Chamber of Commerce and San Rafael Business Improvement District
- Over 100 email notifications to community, neighborhood and business organizations
- Presentations to:
 - San Rafael High School SELAC (School English Learner Advisory Committee) to 110+ families
 - San Rafael Heritage
 - San Rafael Chamber of Commerce
 - League of Women Voters
 - GGT Bus Passenger Advisory Committee
- Over 1,000 online surveys received in English and Spanish

DO YOU USE THE SAN RAFAEL TRANSIT CENTER?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We have been working with the community to develop a new San Rafael Transit Center in downtown San Rafael that is safer, more accessible and provides better transit connections for riders.

Learn more about the project at goldengate.org/SRTC

Take our survey and enter to win a \$25 Clipper card!

Attend our community meeting on **Thursday, Nov 19 at 5:30 PM**. Details on our website

1 Obtain more information about the project at goldengate.org/SRTC

2 ¡Contesta todas las preguntas y participa para ganar una tarjeta Clipper de \$20!

3 Ven a nuestra reunión comunitaria el **jueves 19 de noviembre 5:30 PM**. Detalles en nuestro sitio web

http://goldengate.org/SRTC_Survey

http://goldengate.org/SRTC_Spanish



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Outreach – Survey Conclusions

- There was widespread support for all alternatives and no notable difference between impressions of the three alternatives among Spanish-speaking transit riders
 - Interpreted to mean that all alternatives provide much needed improvement relative to existing conditions
- Non-transit riders more likely to support Under the Freeway alternative than transit riders
- Transit riders most strongly support the Whistlestop alternative
- Both English-speaking transit riders and non-transit riders had the least favorable opinion of 4th Street Gateway



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Path Forward

- Project Updates – March/April/May 2021
 - GGBHTD Board of Directors Transportation Committee
 - San Rafael City Council
 - TAM Board of Commissioners
 - Marin Transit Board of Directors
- GGBHTD Board of Directors Transportation Committee – May 20th, 2021
 - Recommend Preferred Alternative for Draft EIR to Board of Directors
- GGBHTD Board of Directors – May 21st, 2021
 - Selection of Preferred Alternative for Draft EIR
- Prepare and Release Draft EIR – June 2021
- Community Outreach during 45-day Draft EIR Circulation – July-August 2021
- GGBHTD Board of Directors – December 2021
 - Final EIR Certification/Project Adoption



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