



Memorandum

TO: HISTORIC LANDMARKS
COMMISSION

FROM: Ray Salvano

**SUBJECT: REPORT ON POTENTIAL LIGHT
RAIL TRACK MODIFICATIONS AT
ST. JAMES STATION**

DATE: 01-30-13

Council District: 3

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the report and provide comments on the potential light rail track modifications at the St. James Station.

BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)'s Light Rail Efficiency Project is a major reconfiguration of Light Rail Transit (LRT) to better serve riders and respond to the extension of BART service to San José in 2017. The Light Rail Efficiency Project advances projects and operating changes identified in the 2010 Light Rail Systems Analysis as the most cost-effective strategies for attracting riders. The opening of the San Francisco 49ers Stadium in along the Tasman Light Rail corridor in 2014 provides an impetus for accelerating the efficiency projects to provide significant rider benefits in advance of 2017.

VTA is advancing preliminary engineering on Phase I projects, with the hopes of completing them in advance of the opening of the 49ers Stadium in 2014. Phase I projects include:

1. ***Southern Express*** will expand pilot Commuter Express service to provide All-Day Express Service on Santa Teresa—Alum Rock line
2. ***Almaden Local*** will establish a new line from Almaden to Mountain View, including direct service from Almaden to downtown San José
3. ***Winchester—Downtown San José line*** will turn back Winchester service in downtown San José (Almaden line provides connection to Mountain View)
4. ***New special event service*** between Mountain View and Alum Rock will serve stadium events and prepare for the 2017 BART connection in Milpitas
5. ***First Street Speed Improvements*** will increase LRT operating speeds on North First Street North of Civic Center Station and also on the Downtown Transit Mall
6. ***Transit Signal Priority*** will implement a system-wide real-time, reliable transit signal prioritization and light rail vehicle detection system to increase LRT operating speeds

Attachment A, *Transit Fact Sheet*, further describes the Light Rail Efficiency Project.

ANALYSIS

One of the three essential capital projects identified to support the new LRT Service Plan is a By-Pass Track in the downtown area. The By-Pass Track provides the operational flexibility that will enable the launch of new local service between Almaden and Mountain View, and will facilitate major expansion of existing Commuter Express service to provide All-Day express service on the Santa Teresa – Alum Rock line between Ohlone/Chynoweth Station and downtown San José. Attachment B illustrates this future service reconfiguration.

As reported at the December 3, 2012 meeting of the Transportation and Environment Committee, VTA has developed over a dozen alternative locations to construct a by-pass track, and continues to evaluate options based on community input and criteria including passenger convenience, stations served, operational safety, traffic impacts, parkland impacts, parking impacts, construction impacts, and capital and operating costs.

By-Pass Track Operations – St James Station Alternatives

Discussions between City and VTA staff in October 2012 focused on constructing a by-pass track adjacent to the St. James Station on either 1st Street or 2nd Street between St. John and St. James Streets. Both alternatives would construct the passing track in the existing bus-only lane, increasing transit utilization of roadway already designated for transit. Bus service would be maintained in the new LRT/bus lane. It is noted that the 2nd Street alternative as originally envisioned would also require the widening of a portion of 2nd Street to accommodate auto, bus and light rail uses. The widening would be consistent with the existing street width toward the southern end of the block.

Operationally, the by-pass track will allow Express and Local trains to depart from the existing main line during short, recurring periods when Winchester trains are waiting at the platform between their in- and out-bound runs. Express and Local trains will serve St James Station from the by-pass track and then proceed. The by-pass track enables rider-friendly train spacing and facilitates safe operations on the two single-track segments of the Winchester line. Winchester trains are typically one car and never exceed two cars. A two-car train is approximately 180 feet long, occupying about the same space as nine parallel-parked automobiles. The following table illustrates how long Winchester trains are scheduled to layover at St James Station:

Winchester Line Layover at Station, Typical Weekday

Scheduled Layover Time¹	Cumulative Time per Hour	Layover Time as Percent
3.5 minutes (min) per trip		
4 trips per peak hour	14 min per peak hour	23% of each peak hour
2 trips per off peak hour	7 min per off peak hour	12% of each off peak hour
		14% of entire day (203 minutes)

¹Sometimes a train arrives a little early or late, individual layover times will vary slightly from schedule

Historic Context

2nd Street did not exist in this area until the mid-1950s, while 1st Street has a rich transit history, dating back to the early days of the City and St James Park. From the 1880s to the late 1930s, 1st Street had two streetcar tracks providing two-way transit service. These tracks were removed and paved over in the 1940s. Construction of modern LRT was completed on 1st and 2nd Streets in 1988, with stations at St James Park. In 2007, the Downtown San José Light Rail Platform Retrofit project updated the current St James Stations to allow level boarding and exiting between light rail vehicles and station platforms and to provide additional station renovation.

Current Status

- Of the two potential by-pass track locations in the vicinity of St. James Park, VTA and City staff agree the 1st Street location is preferred over 2nd Street, as it avoids widening 2nd Street and is consistent with established robust transit service on 1st Street. Attachment C provides a Plan View and Photo Simulation of the 1st Street alternative.
- On January 9, 2013, the Parks Commission received information on the project and considered its impact on St James Park. Commissioners were informed that other locations outside the vicinity of the Park are under consideration, but given their purview, the two options proposed closest to St James Park were emphasized. Commissioners considered how the By-Pass Track would operate and how long the Winchester line would layover at St James Station under the future LRT Service Plan. Staff informed Commissioners of concerns that have been expressed regarding potential safety and visual impacts to the Park. Staff also shared the counterpoint that more activity may provide additional eyes on the Park and provide safety in numbers. The Commission voted to “Accept the Report with preference for the First Street option.” Staff offered to return to the Commission to provide an update once a final location has been recommended.
- One alternative to 1st Street is to construct a new facility 1.5 miles north of Downtown to layover the Winchester line north of Civic Center Station near the existing LRT Operations and Maintenance facility on Younger Street. This option would add a third line to a corridor that already has the highest levels of LRT service. The \$1.8 million additional annual operating cost of this option would impact other VTA services. Younger is the only entrance to the LRT Operations and Maintenance yard and cannot be blocked by a train. VTA has indicated this alternative has unacceptable impacts to system-wide LRT operations, unless a substantial investment is made to create a new entrance to the yard off 1st Street north of Younger.
- Additional alternatives remain under consideration and are described in Attachment D, Draft Presentation.

Due to the historic significance of St. James Park and the proposed project location in the St James Square Historic District, City and VTA staff will be attending the February 6, 2013,

HISTORIC LANDMARKS

01-30-13

Subject: Light Rail Track Modifications at St. James Station

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meeting of the Historic Landmarks Commission to provide additional detail and receive comments on this project.

/s/

RAY SALVANO

Acting Deputy Director

Attachment A: Transit Fact Sheet

Attachment B: Expanded Service from South San José

Attachment C: First Street Alternative Plan View and Photo Simulation

Attachment D: Draft Presentation

FACT SHEET: **Transit**

Light Rail Efficiency Project

Project Overview

The Light Rail Efficiency Project is a major reconfiguration of VTA's Light Rail Transit (LRT) system to better serve riders and respond to the extension of BART service to San José. The Light Rail Efficiency Project advances projects and operating changes identified in the 2010 Light Rail Systems Analysis as the most cost-effective strategies for attracting riders.

Project Features

Phase 1

- **Southern Express** will expand pilot Commuter Express service to all-day express service on Santa Teresa – Alum Rock line (Blue line)
- **Almaden Local** will establish a new line from Almaden to Mountain View, including direct service from Almaden to downtown San José (Green line)
- **New special event service** between Mountain View and Alum Rock will serve stadium events and prepare for the 2017 BART connection
- **Winchester – Downtown San José line** (Purple line) will turn back Winchester service in downtown San José because new Almaden line will provide connection to Mountain View
- **First Street Speed Improvements** will increase maximum LRT speeds on North First Street from 35 to 45 mph and improve Downtown Transit Mall operations
- **Transit Signal Priority** will implement a system-wide real-time, reliable transit signal prioritization and light rail vehicle detection system to increase LRT operating speeds

Phase 2

- **Northern Express** will establish new line from Mountain View to Alum Rock (Red line) to connect with Caltrain and the new Milpitas BART Station, commensurate with the opening of the BART Silicon Valley Berryessa extension.

Rider Benefits

Ohlone/Chynoweth to Convention Center: <i>With LRT Efficiency Project:</i>	13 min travel time today 9 min, 30% travel time reduction
Almaden to Santa Clara: <i>With LRT Efficiency Project:</i>	26 min travel time today 20 min, 23% travel time reduction
Milpitas LRT/BART to Great America: <i>With LRT Efficiency Project:</i>	23 min travel time today 16 min, 30% travel time reduction

Essential Capital Improvements Enable LRT Service Improvements

- Mountain View double track, Phase I and Phase II
- Santa Clara Light Rail Vehicle Storage
- Downtown San José By-Pass Track
- Fencing, safety enhancements, and street design changes along North First Street

Continued on back



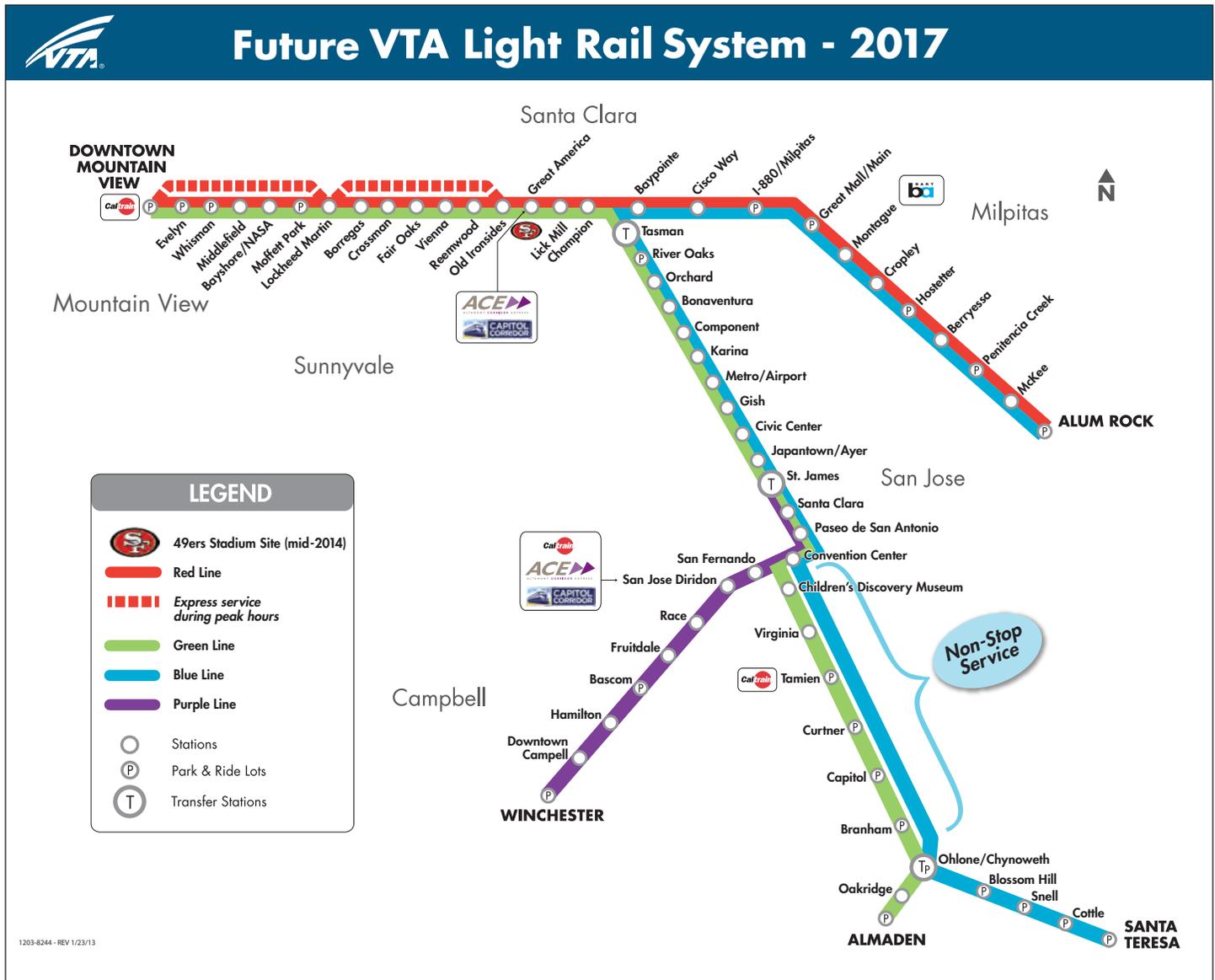
Light Rail Efficiency Project

Capital Cost

- Estimated to cost \$25 million (Phase 1)
- Estimated to cost \$35 million (Phase 2)

Project Schedule and Milestones

The complete program of capital improvements and operating changes included in the *Light Rail Efficiency Project* will be accomplished in two phases and coordinated with the 2014 and 2017 increases in demand.



How to Reach Us

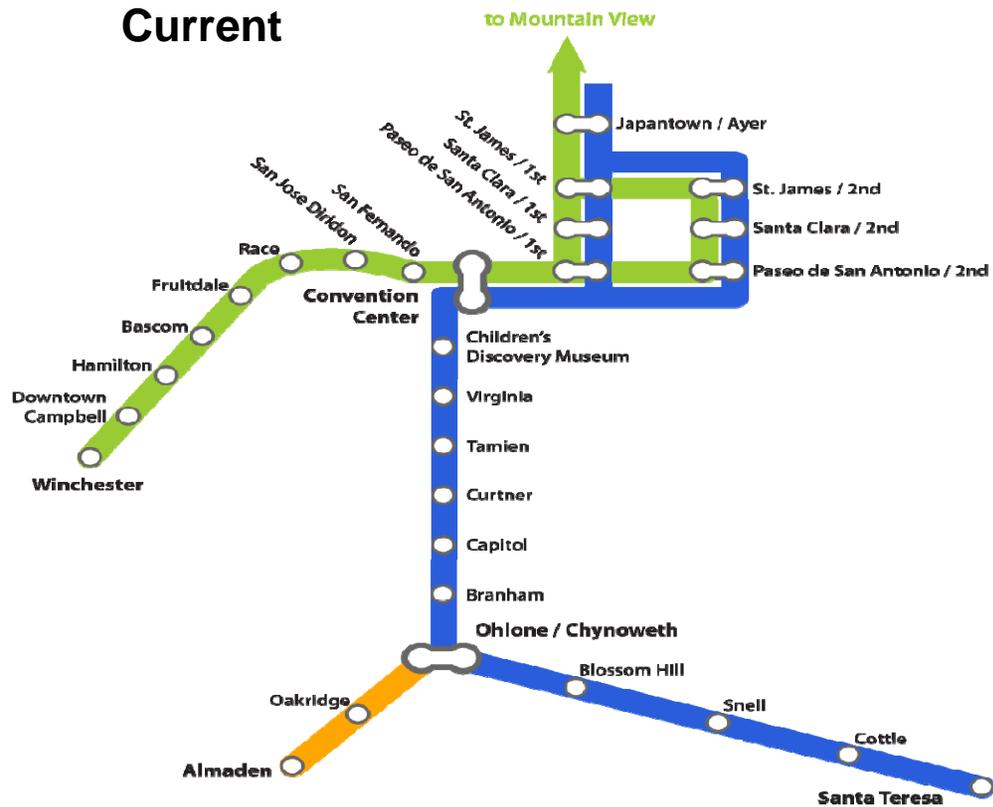
For more information on the Light Rail Efficiency Project call VTA Community Outreach at (408) 321-7575, TTY only (408) 321-2300, email community.outreach@vta.org or visit us on the web at <http://www.vta.org/lightrail/>

VTA Mission: VTA provides sustainable, accessible, community-focused transportation options that are innovative, environmentally responsible, and promote the vitality of our region.

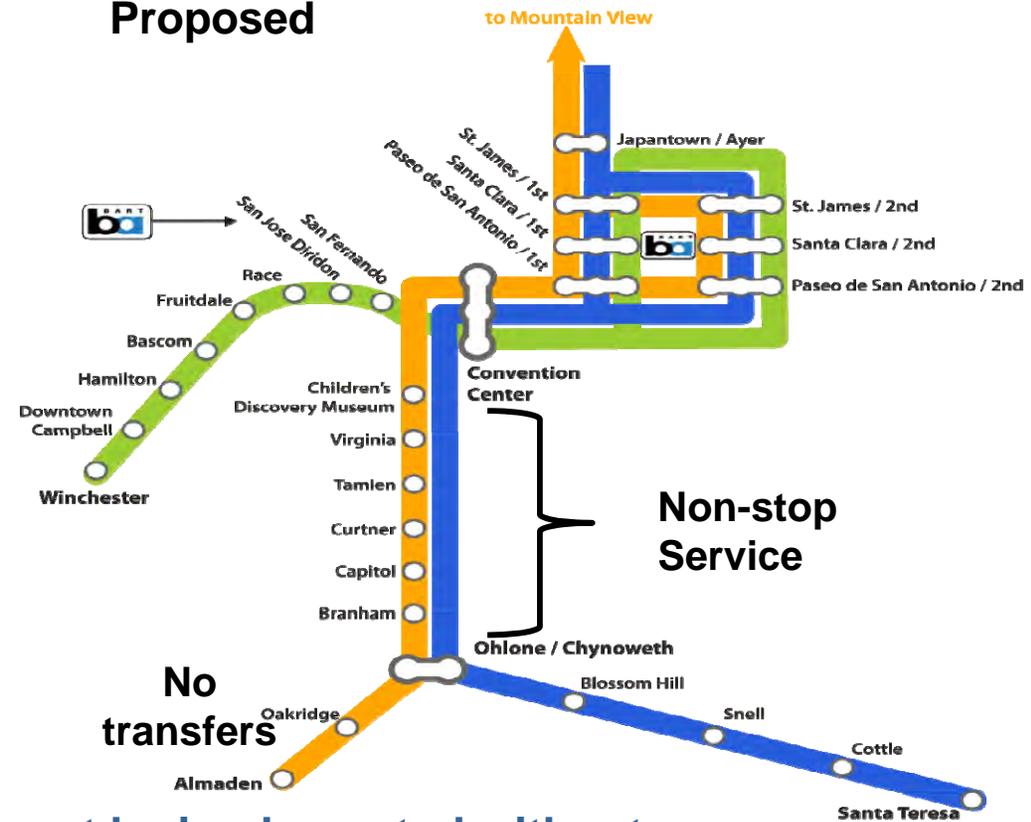
San José By-Pass Track Integral to New Almaden & Express Services



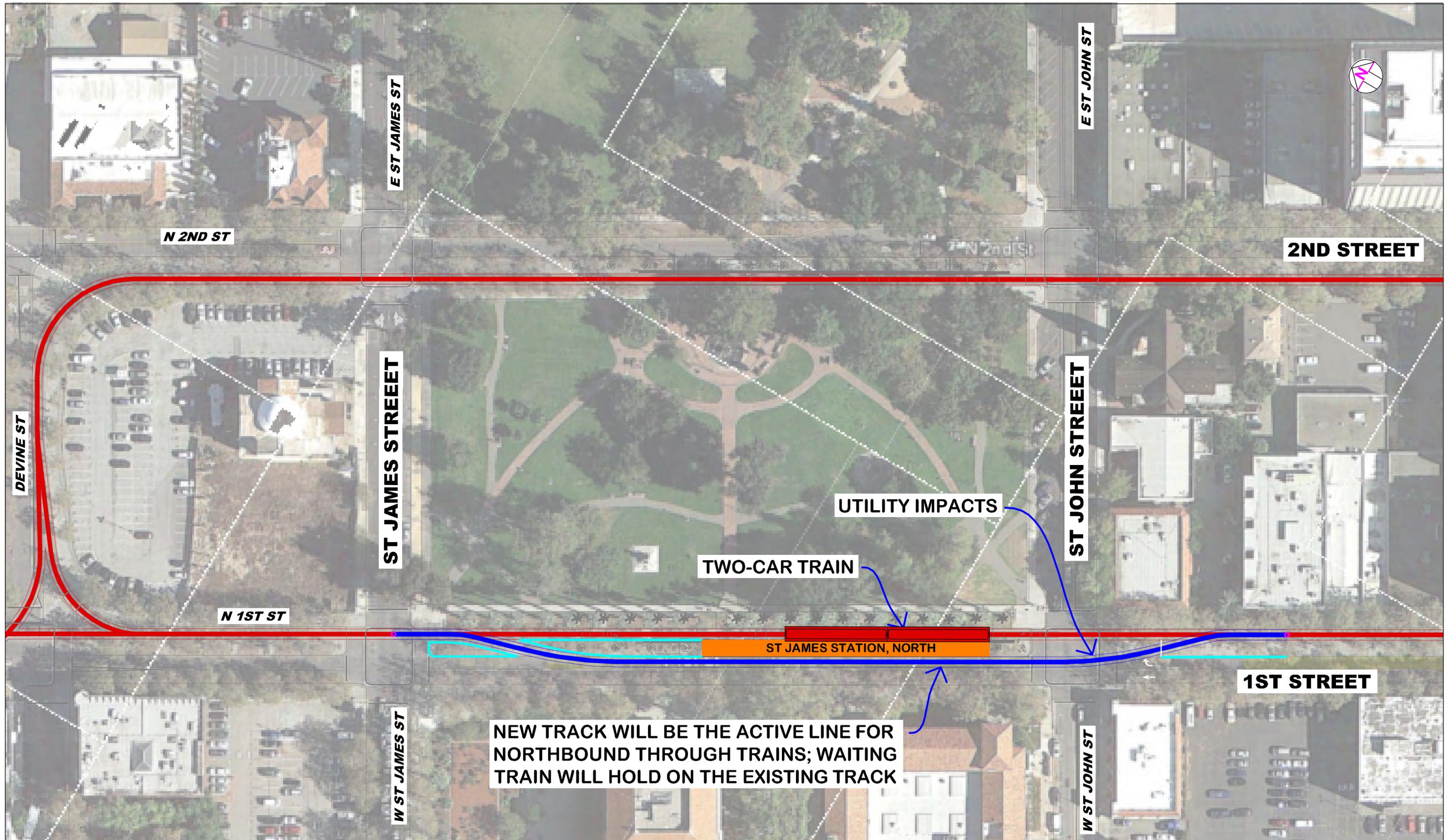
Current



Proposed



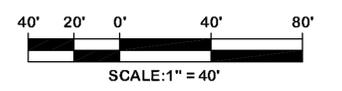
Without By-Pass Track, new Service Plan cannot be implemented without additional Operating Subsidy and more extensive Capital Investment



VTA LRT EFFICIENCY PROJECT

OPTION 1: BY-PASS TRACK IN EXISTING BUS-ONLY LANE ON 1ST ST

- KEY:**
- EXISTING LRT TRACK
 - NEW LRT TRACK
 - EXISTING BUS-ONLY LANE



NEW TRACK WILL BE THE ACTIVE LINE FOR NORTHBOUND THROUGH TRAINS; WAITING TRAIN WILL HOLD ON THE EXISTING TRACK

UTILITY IMPACTS

TWO-CAR TRAIN

ST JAMES STATION, NORTH

N 2ND ST

2ND STREET

N 1ST ST

1ST STREET

E ST JAMES ST

E ST JOHN ST

ST JAMES STREET

ST JOHN STREET

DEVINE ST

W ST JAMES ST

W ST JOHN ST

First Street By-Pass Track Photo Simulations:

EXISTING CONDITIONS, LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM ST JAMES PARK



PROPOSED BY-PASS TRACK, VIEW OF NORTH BOUND TRAIN PASSING, LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM ST JAMES PARK



EXISTING CONDITIONS, BETWEEN TRAIN ACTIVITY, LOOKING SOUTH FROM ST JAMES STREET



PROPOSED BY-PASS TRACK, VIEW OF NORTH BOUND TRAIN PASSING, LOOKING SOUTH FROM ST JAMES STREET



PROPOSED BY-PASS TRACK, BETWEEN TRAIN ACTIVITY, LOOKING SOUTH FROM ST JAMES STREET



EXISTING CONDITIONS, BETWEEN TRAIN ACTIVITY, LOOKING NORTH EAST FROM POST OFFICE



PROPOSED BY-PASS TRACK, BETWEEN TRAIN ACTIVITY, LOOKING NORTH EAST FROM POST OFFICE



LIGHT RAIL EFFICIENCY PROJECT



February 6, 2013

Light Rail Transit Systems Analysis Background



- Project began September 2008
- Comprehensive evaluation of the existing light rail system -- focus on making the system as effective and efficient as possible
- Operations and capital improvements analyzed and tested
- Evaluation of the LRT system to handle projected growth to the years 2018 and 2035
- Board Adopted Light Rail Improvement Plan May 2010

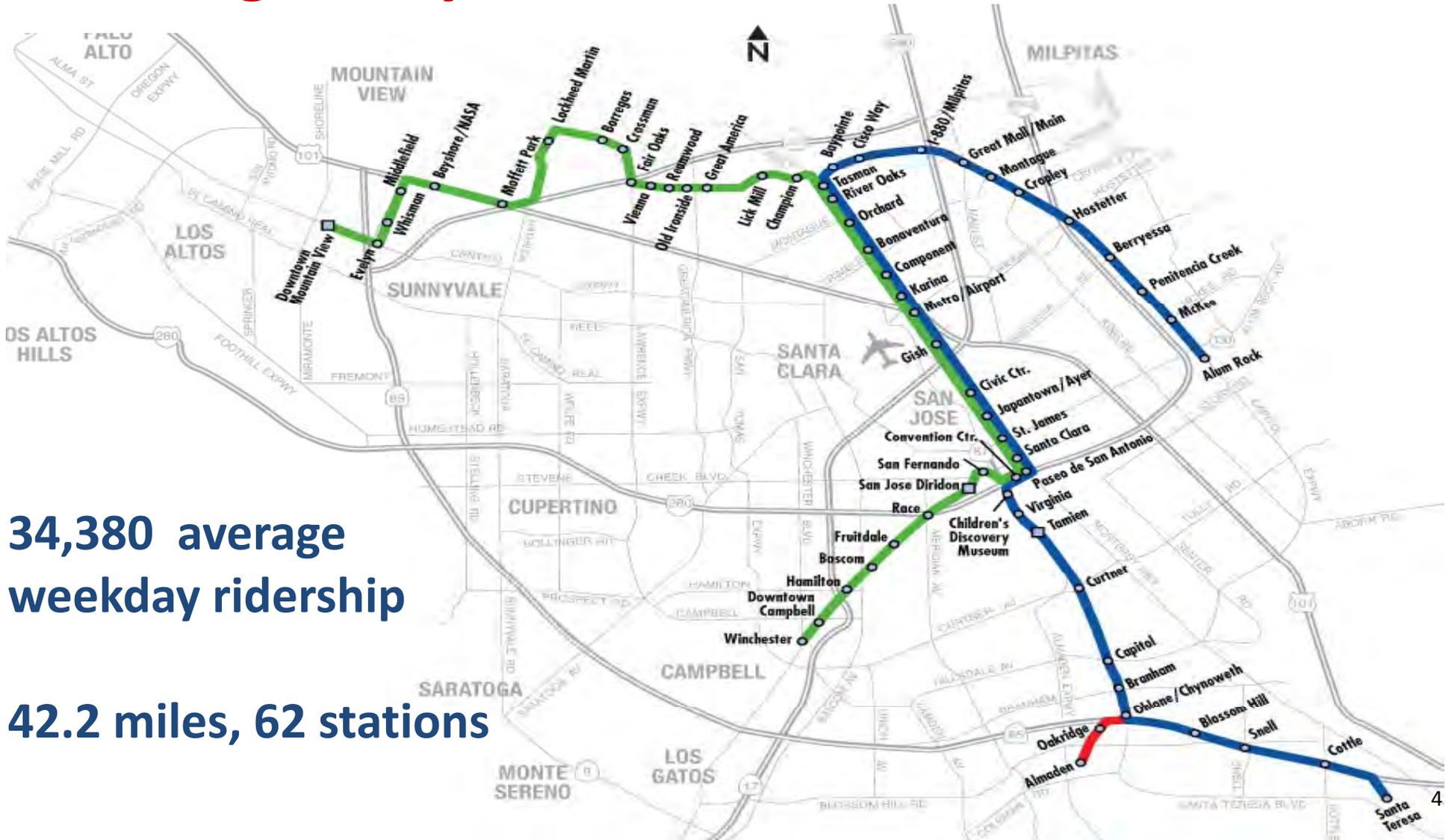


2010 LRT System Analysis Study Goals

- **Increase Ridership**
- **Speed up the System**
- **Spend Money Wisely**
- **Be More Relevant to the Needs of the Valley**



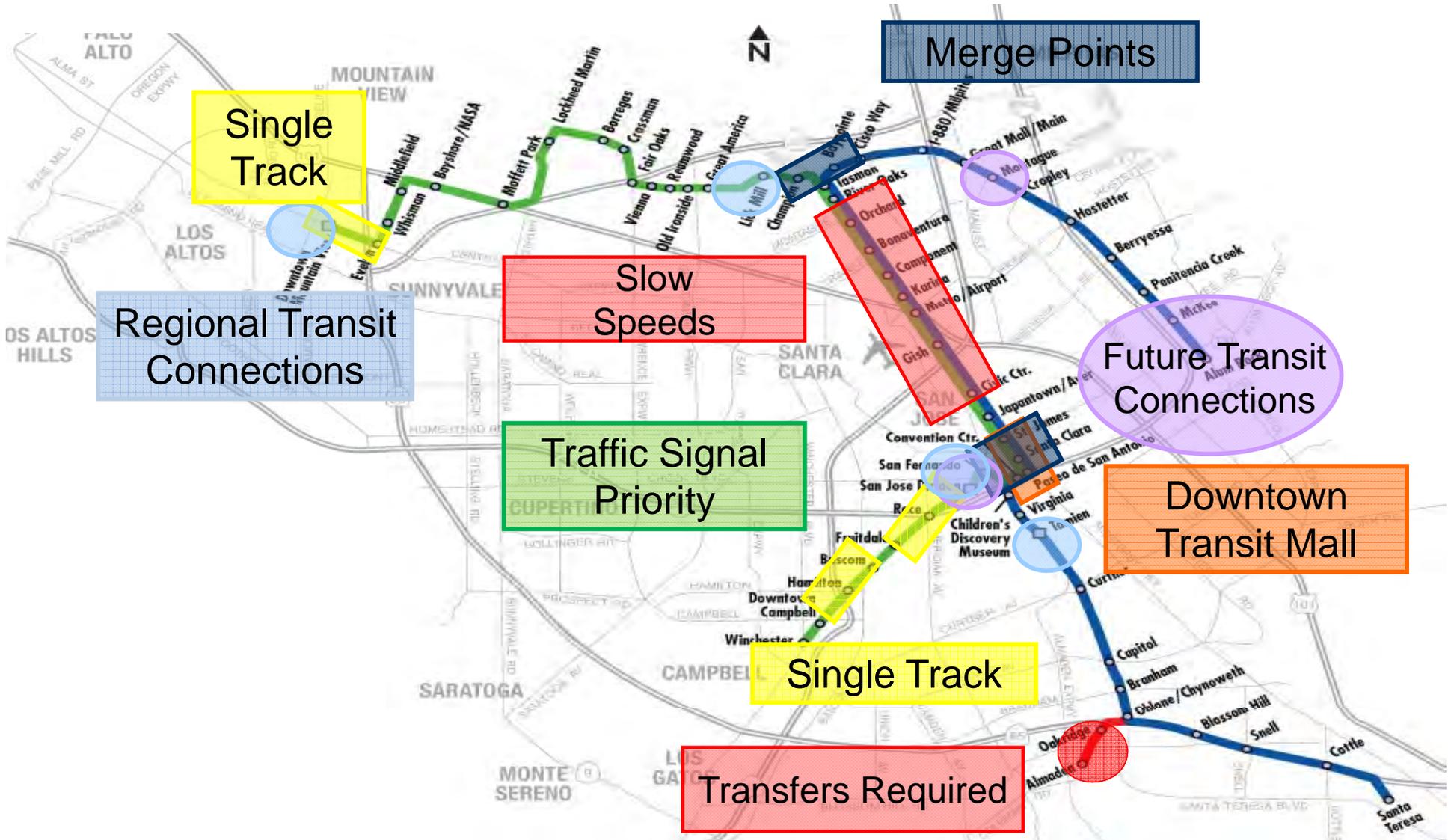
Existing LRT System



34,380 average
weekday ridership

42.2 miles, 62 stations

Light Rail: Constraints and Opportunities



San Jose foresees major increase in Transit Use



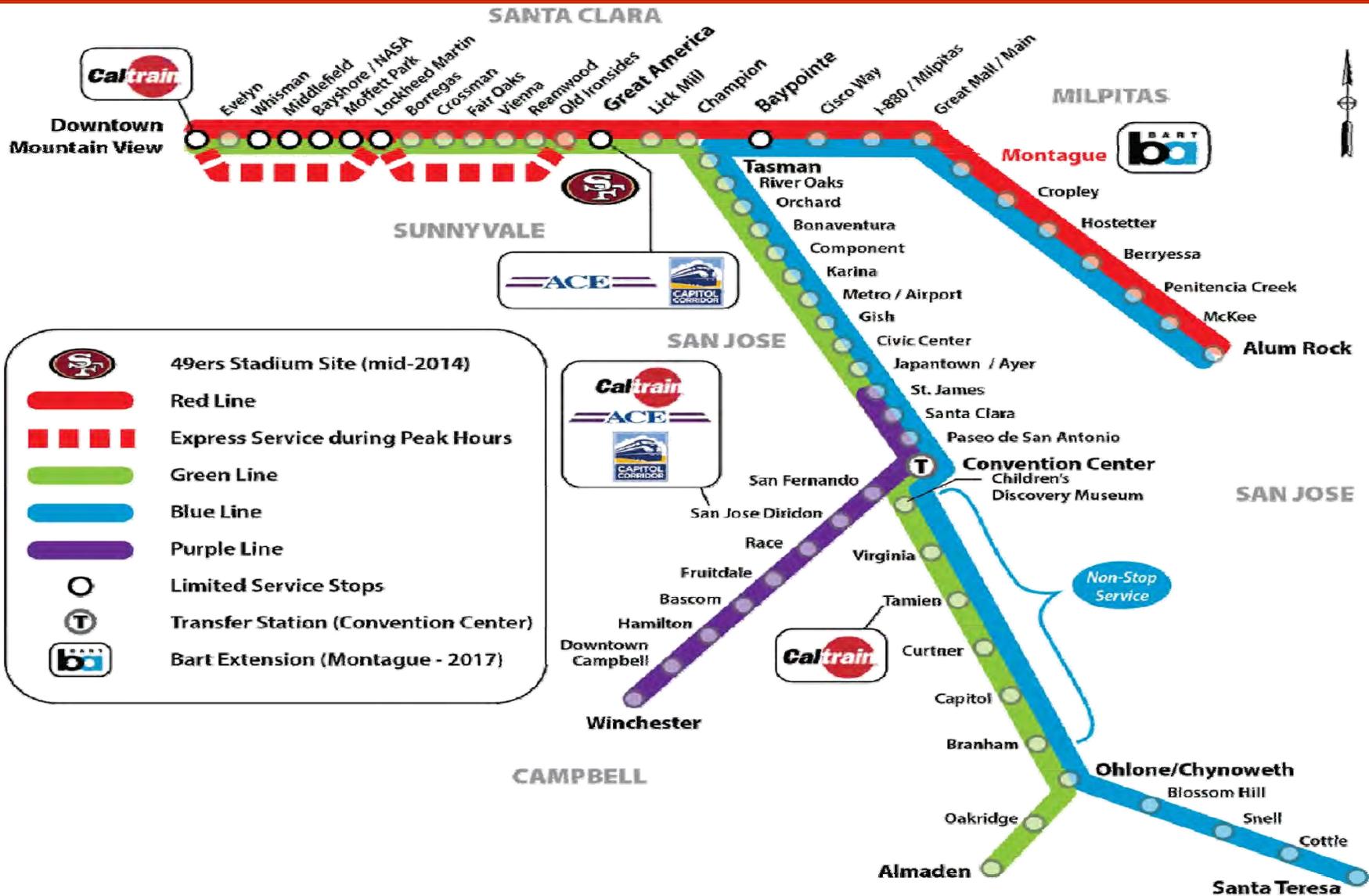
San José Transit Mode Split Targeted to Rise from 4 to 20%

COMMUTE TRIPS TO AND FROM SAN JOSÉ		
MODE	2008	2040 GOAL
Drive alone	77.8%	No more than 40%
Carpool	9.2%	At least 10%
Transit	4.1%	At least 20%
Bicycle	1.2%	At least 15%
Walk	1.8%	At least 15%
Other means (including work at home)	5.8%	See Note 1

Source: 2008 data from American Community Survey (2008).

Adopted San José 2040 General Plan

Efficiency Projects Transform 2017 Network to Serve New Markets



Light Rail Efficiency Project, Phase I



- *Southern Express* will expand pilot Commuter Express to all-day Express Service on Santa Teresa to Alum Rock line
- *Almaden Local* will establish new service from Almaden to Mountain View, no transfers from Almaden to Downtown
- *New special event service* between Mountain View and Alum Rock will serve stadium events and prepare for 2017 BART connection
- *Winchester – Downtown line* will turn back Winchester line from Campbell in Downtown San José
- *First Street Speed Improvements* will increase LRT speeds
- *Transit Signal Priority* will implement real-time, reliable transit signal prioritization and light rail vehicle detection system to increase LRT speeds

Rider Benefits: Travel Times with LRT Efficiency Projects



Trip	Key Improvements	Existing Travel Time	With LRT Efficiency Project	Travel Time Savings	Estimated drive time 2018
Ohlone/Chynoweth to Convention Center	All Day Express Service	13 min	9 min	30% travel time reduction	13 min
Almaden to Santa Clara	No transfer required at Ohlone/Chynoweth	26 min	20 min	23% travel time reduction	26 min
Milpitas (BART) to Great America (49ers Stadium)	New direct connection, No transfer required at Tasman, Signal Timing improvements	23 min	16 min	30% Travel time Reduction	17 min

LRT Efficiency Projects Support Cost-Effective Ridership Growth



Current Weekday Ridership	34,380 Daily Boardings	--
2018 No Project	54,836 Daily Boardings	+ 59%
2018 LRT Efficiency Project	62,678 Daily Boardings	+ 82%

2018 No Project	54,836 Daily Boardings	
2018 LRT Efficiency Project	62,678 Daily Boardings	
Difference	7,842 Daily Boardings	+ 14%

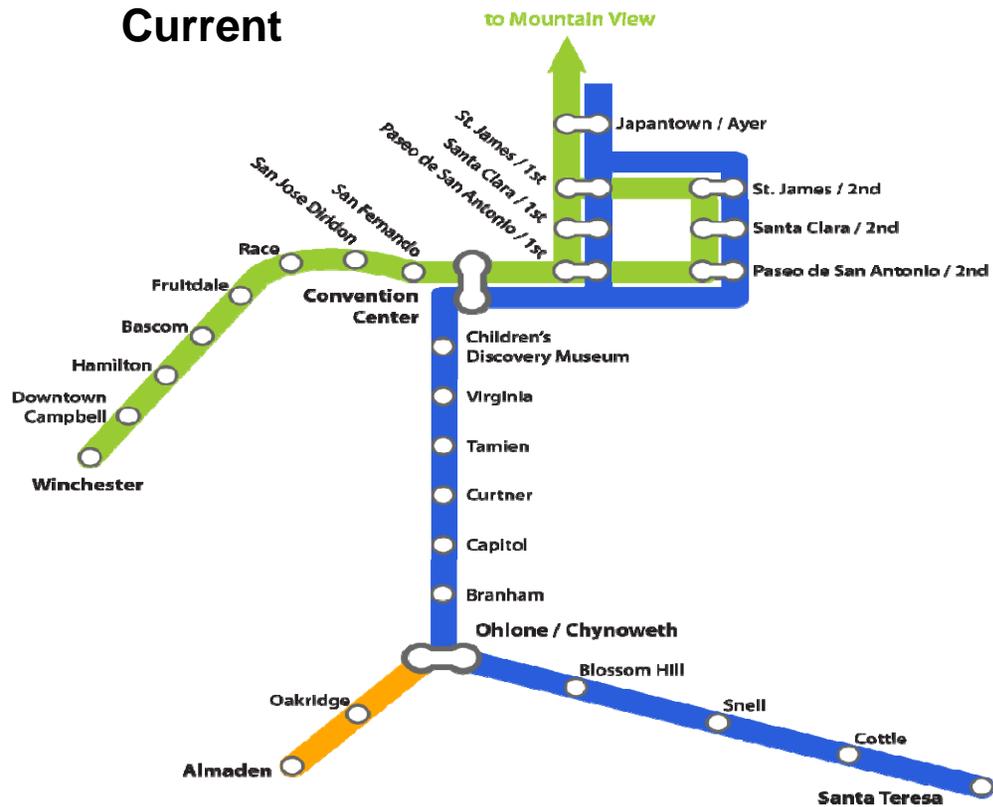
Riders will realize benefits in advance of 2017 if LRT Improvements can be delivered earlier



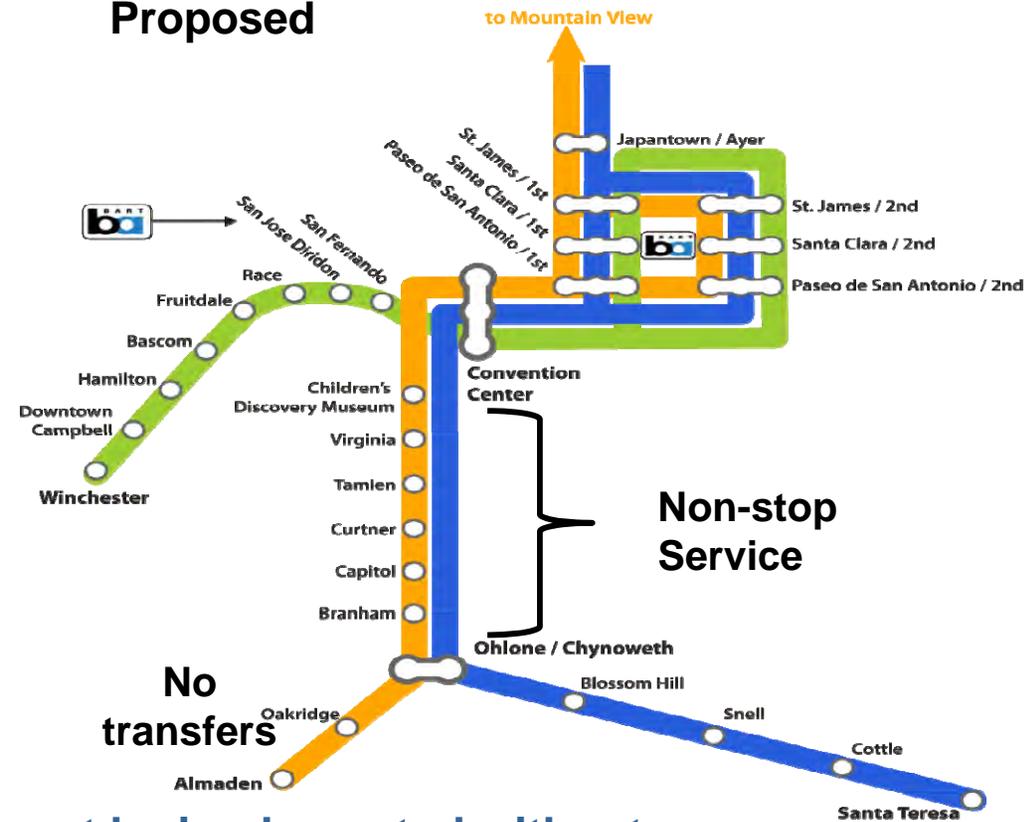
San José By-Pass Track Integral to New Almaden & Express Services



Current



Proposed



Without By-Pass Track, new Service Plan cannot be implemented without additional Operating Subsidy and more extensive Capital Investment

By-Pass Track Operations



Illustration of Proposed By-Pass Track installed in existing Bus Only lane on 2nd St



Winchester Train scheduled to layover for 3.5 minutes between Inbound and Outbound runs on existing Track at St James Station



Almaden Train arriving from north while Winchester Train is laying over

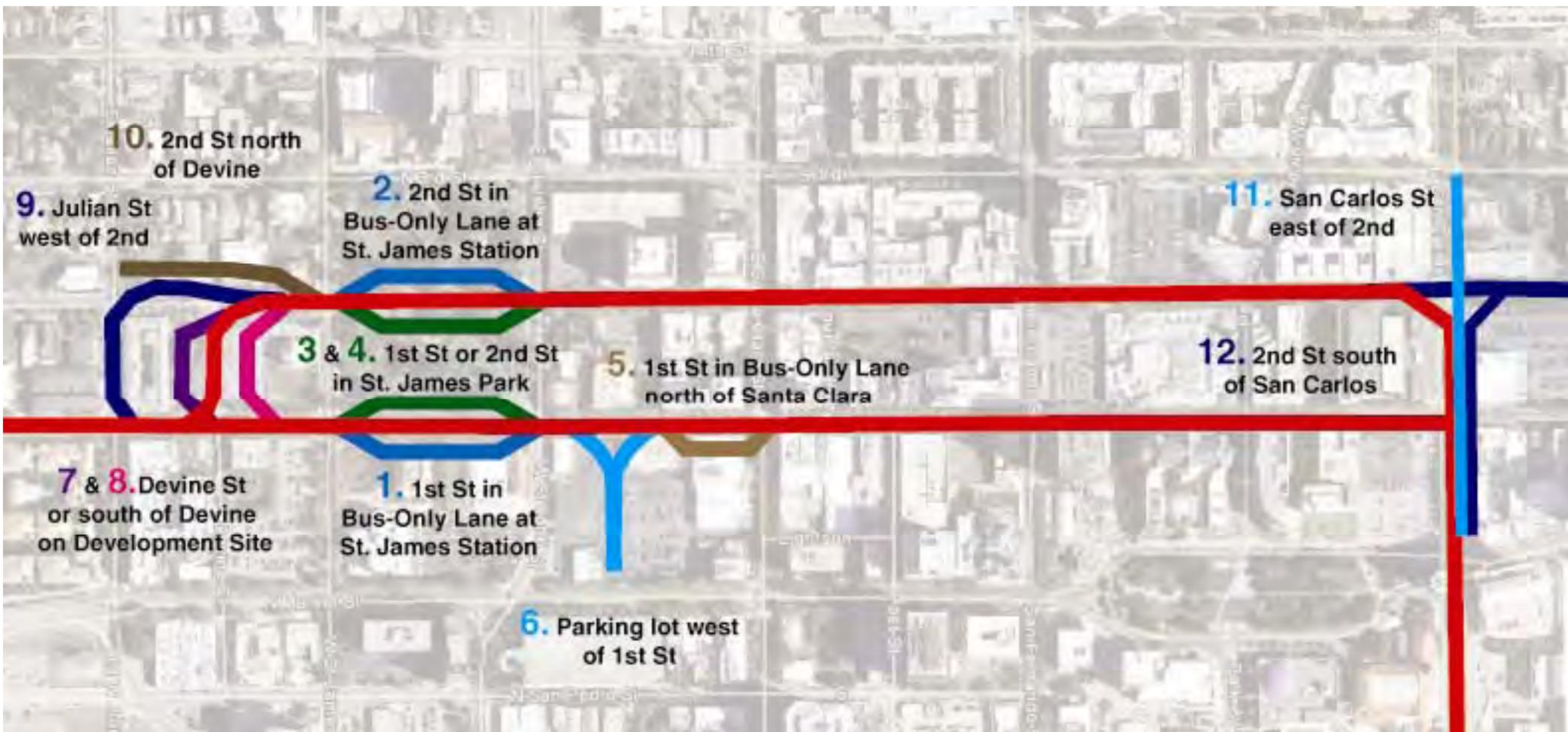


Almaden Train pulls into St. James Station on By-Pass Track, serves station and departs

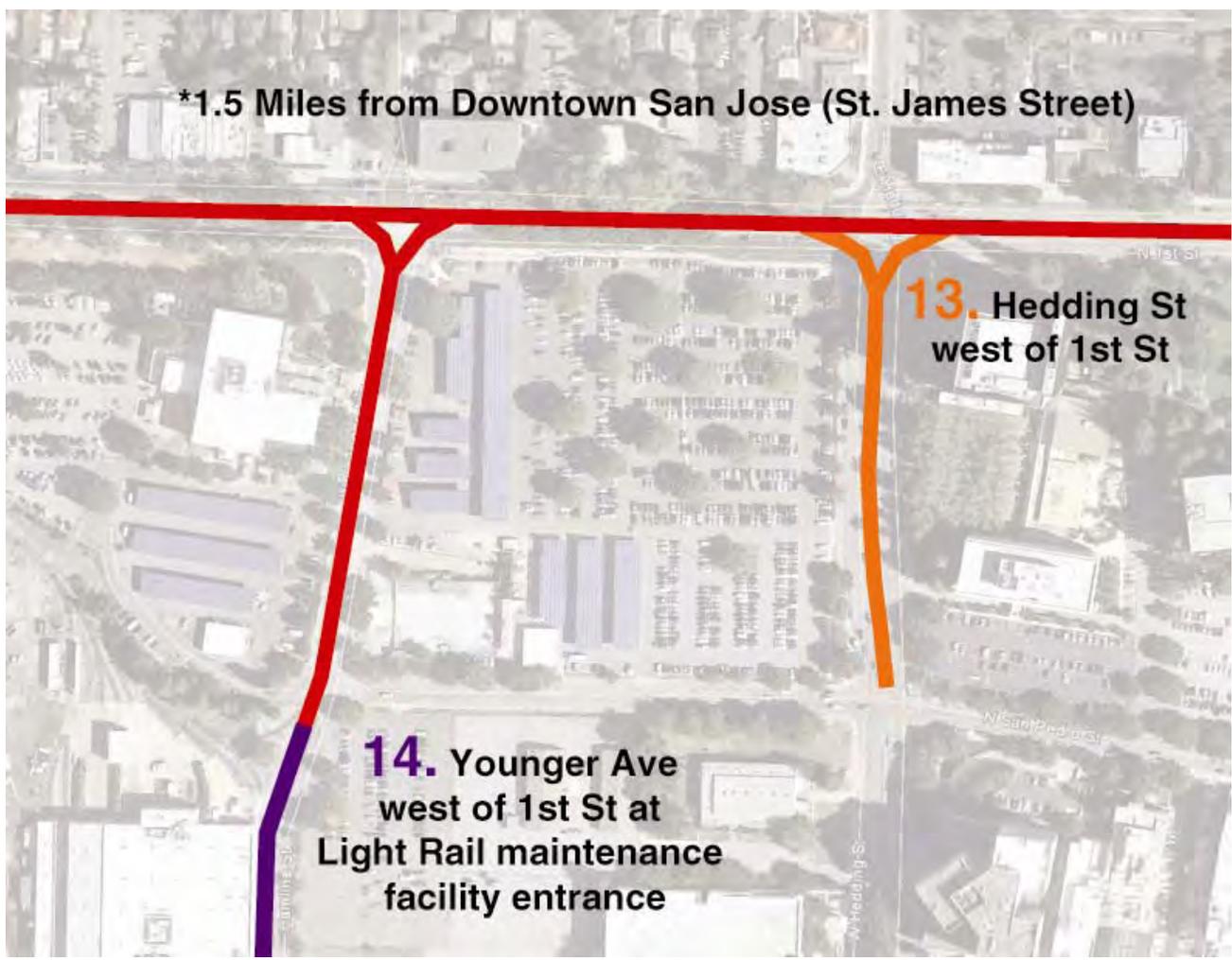


Santa Teresa Train pulls into St. James Station, serves station and departs

San José By-Pass Track Options Under Study



San José By-Pass Track Options Under Study

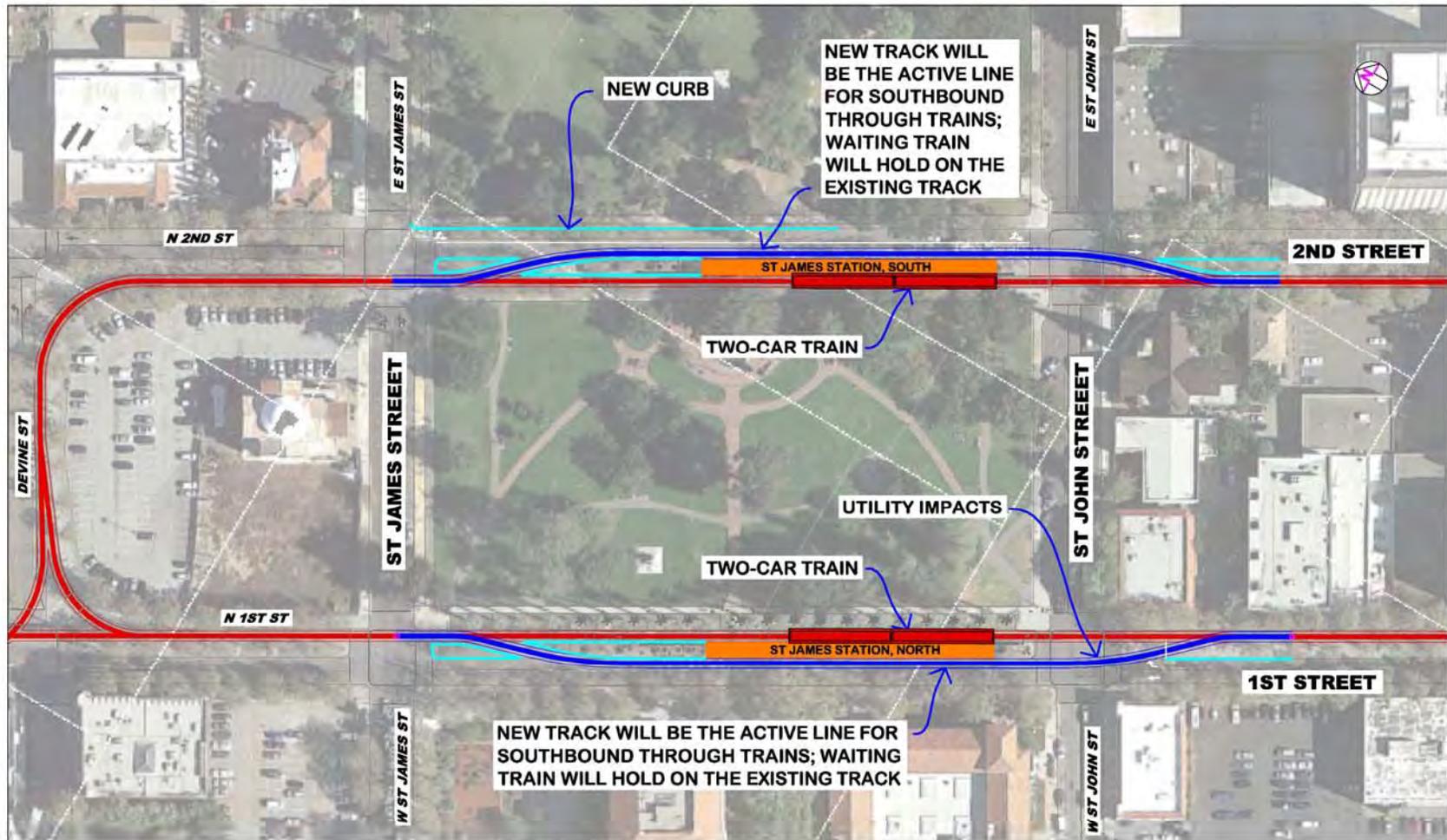




Not All Alternatives are Equal

- Two are not constructable (7 & 8 on Devine St)
- Some do not get riders to their desired destination (11 & 12)
- Two impact park land (3 & 4)
- Others introduce tail tracks to the city's densest blocks (6 & 12)
- Some impact neighborhood circulation (9 & 10)
- Capital costs vary widely, from \$ 6.0 to \$25.0 M
(Most cost effective options located at existing stations)
- Two have significant operating cost impacts (13 & 14)

Two Options in Existing Bus Lane Best Meet Transit Objective

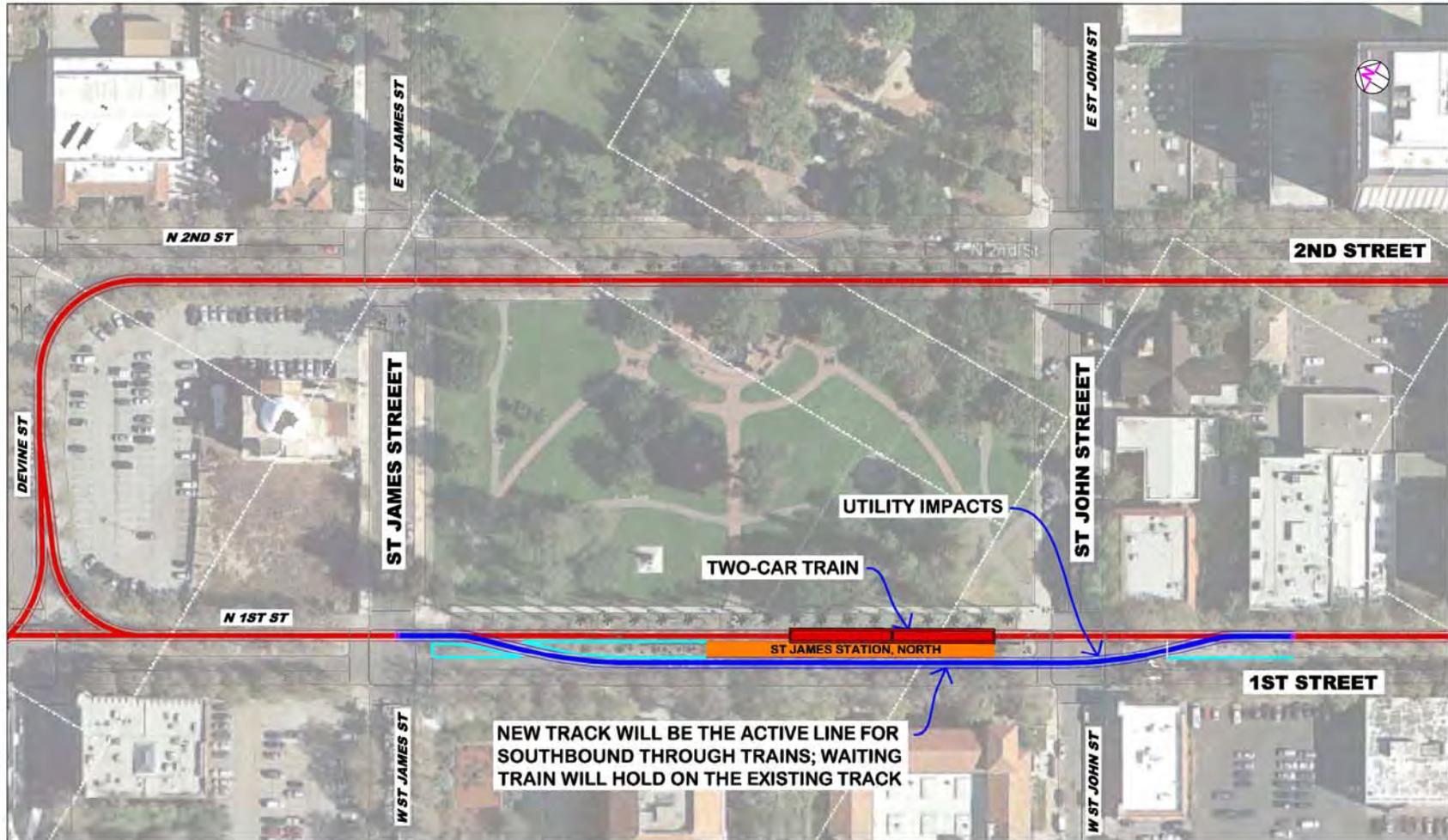


KEY:
— EXISTING LRT TRACK
— NEW LRT TRACK

VTA LRT EFFICIENCY PROJECT
 OPTION 1: BY-PASS TRACK IN EXISTING BUS-ONLY LANE ON 1ST ST
 OPTION 2: BY-PASS TRACK IN EXISTING BUS-ONLY LANE ON 2ND ST



First Street option avoids widening 2nd Street, reflects past history



VTA LRT EFFICIENCY PROJECT

KEY:
— EXISTING LRT TRACK
— NEW LRT TRACK

OPTION 1: BY-PASS TRACK IN EXISTING BUS-ONLY LANE ON 1ST ST



Transit is part of Historic Urban Fabric on First Street



View looking south down north First Street from corner of St James Street, 1920-1925

Transit is Part of St James Historic District

- St James Park established 1868
- First Street Railroad Company began operations in 1872
- Originally, horse-drawn streetcars used rail tracks for passenger comfort and speed



Transit is Part of St James Historic District



- In 1880s, electric streetcars replaced horse-drawn street cars
- For over 50 years, electric street cars served nearly 130 miles of Santa Clara County, including two tracks on First Street.
- Street car service discontinued April 10, 1938, replaced by bus service
- Old trolley lines removed and paved over in the 1940s
- New road on 2nd Street introduced through St James Park in 1955
- VTA is committed to following St James Historic District Design Guidelines and to supporting St James Park Master Plan implementation with project design



1930, First and Hensley

Then



Pre 1932, McKinley Statue and St James Hotel

&



2007, First and Hensley

Now



2007, McKinley Statue, mature trees obscure views

First Street By-Pass Track Photo Simulation



Existing Conditions, Looking Southwest from St. James Park



Proposed By-Pass Track in Use on N. First St. Northbound train is passing Winchester Train at St. James Station in shared Bus/LRT Lane

Light Rail Efficiency Project— Next Steps

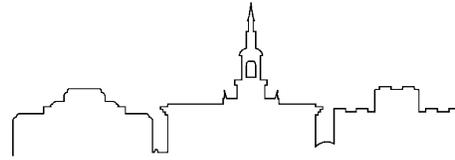
- Preferred Alternatives Identified for 2 of 3 Capital Projects
- Public Process continues on San José By-Pass Track
- City of San José anticipated to recommend option in March 2013
- Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Underway
- Final Design anticipated August 2013



Thank You

Questions, Comments





PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE

Dedicated to Preserving San Jose's Architectural Heritage

January 23, 2013

VTA Recommending Historic San Jose Park Site, PAC*SJ Opposed

The Preservation Action Council of San Jose (PAC*SJ) has studied the proposal to create a VTA light-rail layover track on First or Second Street at St. James Park (VTA options 1, 2, 3, & 4). The layover is intended to hold local trains while express trains pass on a new “run-around track”. Should this proposal be implemented, the visual effect of stationary, advertising-clad trains parked in a National Register Historic District for nearly 30 minutes of every hour will further compromise the historical integrity of the park and the fabric of the St. James Square National Register Historic District. The impact could be so severe that the historic district could be de-listed from the National Register. For these reasons, PAC*SJ strongly opposes this proposal.

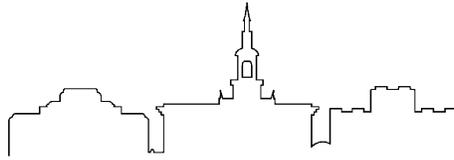
St. James Square lies at the heart of historic San Jose. In 1847, San Jose's first city plan designated these two city blocks just north of the former Mexican city center as a public open space and the park was laid out by Chester Lyman in 1848. Starting in 1868, the city planted trees and lawns, laid out pathways, constructed a central fountain, and renamed the site St. James Park. In 1977, the park and its surroundings, taken as one unit, were placed on the National Register of Historic Places as the St. James Square Historic District.

Over the years, some of the most distinguished buildings in the city were located overlooking this public square: Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Santa Clara County Courthouse, First Unitarian Church, First Church of Christ Scientist, St. Claire Club, San Jose Athletic Club (formerly the Masonic Hall) and San Jose Post Office remain.

The park has been a focal point of San Jose's history, being the site of various civic and cultural activities. President William McKinley spoke there in 1901. Following the 1906 earthquake, the National Guard camped in the park to aid in the city's recovery. In 1933 the Hart kidnapping suspects were lynched from trees in the park. Robert Kennedy spoke there in 1968 just before his assassination.

Since its inception, the park has been the subject of numerous designs and master plans, with the latest master plan being adopted in 2002. Implementation of these plans has been slow or nonexistent. In the ten years since the adoption of the most recent plan, the only significant improvement to the park has been the removal in 2011 of the ‘temporary’ senior center structures in the east block, continuing San Jose's neglect of and indifference to St. James Park and its surroundings.

The current park master plan says, “Retain unobstructed views into the park,” something the current VTA proposal would clearly violate. Parked trains would effectively split the park in two in the VTA's preferred option or separate it from civic activities at the County Court House and Post Office building in the alternative option. Police oversight for illegal activities in the park would become even more difficult. VTA options 1-4 would disrupt the square as a unit that is listed in the National Register.



PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE

Dedicated to Preserving San Jose's Architectural Heritage

The flow of people and events in a “pedestrian spine” through the center of the park as contemplated in the master plan would be disrupted under the current proposal. As stated in the plan, “The vehicular traffic on Second Street limits a sense of unification within the park and impedes pedestrian park users.” The proposed project will exacerbate this split between the two halves of the park.

The Preservation Action Council of San Jose recognizes the community benefit of the VTA’s effort to increase efficiency and generate new passengers for light rail. We just do not believe this “layover track” in St. James Park is the right place for this effort. There are alternative locations along the light rail line, some already owned by the VTA, which are more appropriate and do not adversely impact the historic core of San Jose. VTA claims of excessive operating costs for attractive alternatives such as those near Civic Center station remain unsubstantiated.

For all these reasons, PAC* SJ opposes layover track locations in and around St. James Park.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Thacker
President