

How will a Car-light Diridon area work?

Monday, March 8, 2021

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Hosted by: Friends of Caltrain + City of SJ

Public Attendance: 55

Staff Attendance: 8

Objectives: Increase public understanding about how the combination of projects (and bigger picture trends) will create the conditions for different travel patterns, based on evidence from other places – trying as much as possible to use everyday language.

Overview: At this virtual event hosted by Friends of Caltrain, learn about the City of San Jose's plans and policies in the works, best practices from car-light/transit-rich hubs in other communities, and opportunities for transit to move more people seamlessly and conveniently in the Diridon area and beyond.

Link to Video: <https://youtu.be/wNODYN1Oy1w>

Presenters:

Ian Griffiths, Seamless Bay Area

Terri O'Connor, CHS Consulting

Lori Severino, City of San Jose, Diridon Program Manager

Eric Eidlin, City of San Jose, Station Planning Manager

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Presentation by City Staff: Lori Severino and Eric Eidlin
 - Overview of projects in DSA: Draft DSA Amendment; Google DT West
 - 3 pronged approach: land use/design; investment in regional transit; programming
- Regional Expert: Terri O'Connor
 - Balancing goals for transit
 - User groups most affected
 - Groups funding/supporting user groups
 - Equity Improvements
 - Parking: Unbundled parking; Shared Parking
 - Subsidized Transit
- Regional Transit System: Seamless Bay Area
 - Transit is behind the needs of residents/commuters
 - Principles for Seamless transit

- Station design and wayfinding in relation to usability
- Equitable consistent fares
- Next Steps
 - Upcoming Meetings
 - Upcoming City Decisions
- Q&A

Key Themes:

- Cost: **Concern for the cost of trips** and equity integrated into said costs, offer free transit services to promote increased ridership
- Bike and Pedestrian Safety: **Focus on biker and pedestrian safety** and consider enforcement for safety
- Interconnectedness: **Ensure that transit is connected seamlessly regionally** and that connections are well timed and easily accessible for micro-mobility
- Promoting Transit: **Ensure that the cost-benefit** of using transit over driving is well known, well defined, and outweighs driving
- Sustainability: **Promote transit system with a sustainable lens** and ensure transit system is electrified and implementing sustainable design
- The Role of Google: Consider Google's role as an employer for promoting transit as well as the integration of innovative Google technology from other cities. Discourage Google shuttles in the area
- Process: **Engage the community** with more transparency to meeting logistics, specifically chat and questions visible to everyone in ZOOM meetings

Notes:

- In the fare zone approach, there's a logical possibility that short urban trips could subsidize long suburban trips. How does this relate to equity practices?
 - *Details are being looked at in the Fare Integration Study*
 - *Zone Based Systems don't necessitate that longer trips are subsidized. Opens up local options and integrating multiple agencies*
 - *Transparency around full costs prior to riding*
- In the metrics quoted, no mention of individual driver costs/duration of trips? How can the city optimize trip time/cost for people avoiding driving?
 - *Incentivize alternative trips and make them competitive*
 - *Parking permits not monthly, but daily or hourly to allow for flexibility*
 - *Flex-pass: part parking reimbursement, part alternative modes*
 - *Residents might need a guest parking approach, or pay for additional spots*
- What's being done to make bike commuting safer in DSA?
 - *A bit. Better bike plan underway that proposes many improvement. Station project proposes many additional connections and bike/ped only connections.*
 - *Dutch inspired bike parking*
- How will BART be connected at Diridon?

- *Being worked out. BART represents the single largest mode of transit to BART. We have an “Access Hierarchy”. The mode bringing in the most amount of people would be let off at the center of the station to access other high demand transits*
- Traffic Study?
 - *There is a suit of improvements with DTW and DSAP that propose a range of the principles at the end of Chapter 4 (this is being revised, but original draft is available)*
 - *DSAP isn’t a project, it’s an amendment*
 - *Draft EIR released last fall, includes local Transit Analysis*
- Lodging, is it for companies and employees or the general public?
 - *For the public*
- Is Google planning to make use of the proposed transit system or private shuttles?
 - *Location chosen for rich transit environment provided → taking advantage options*
 - *Local transportation analysis in Draft EIR*
- Is Google planning to open up the self-driving car rideshare system in Arizona for the Diridon area?
 - *unknown*
- Equity: What is being done to make sure transit programs are available to everyone on the income spectrum?
 - *Area is set up for more sustainable and affordable modes of transportation*
 - *As part of DTP, there’s a set of Equity metrics. These metrics developed with Equity Advisory Group to develop restorative investment and access metrics. There are 6 policies for this. In DSA, using these principles. Notion that TMA could be expanded to broader downtown area and existing businesses and to all end users. Ensuring that we are able to make the area accessible to anyone*
- “Restorative Investments”. What is that?
 - *Fair investment (retrospective)*
 - *Vetting projects against this*
- We need to become car-free. Not one car per person, but car-free. We need to be sustainable for the climate crisis. We need to make the radical changes science is demanding of us
- Has the plan considered direct bicycle connections to the local Guadalupe River trail or nearby trails?
 - Yes, but not flushed out yet

Chat Notes:

Italics = city/presenter/host

- I don’t know if you are aware of this but currently there is no option to send a message to all the co-hosts/presenters at once. There is not an option to send a message to everyone. I can only send one-on-one msg to each of the co-hosts and yourself. I don’t have anything to add to the chat right now, but noticed the chat was set to send a direct msg to you. That’s when I discovered there is no option to send to everyone
- Will the presentation be shared with participants?

- *The slides will be shared after*
- *Please type your questions and we'll take them as they relate or at the end*
- How many parking spaces in the combined lots/streets in the Diridon area today?
 - *Roughly 6000*
- 1. What are the approximate walking times between the different rail and bus systems? 2. What happens to the existing Diridon train station? Will it be preserved? 3. How will Downtown and the Diridon station areas be integrated given the barrier of Highway 87?
- Is the housing development for the Google project going to be for the company's employees or the general public?
- Has the plan considered direct bicycle connections to the local Guadalupe River trail or nearby trails?
- *Some really good questions we'll pick up at the end*
- How are you facilitating shared parking across different land uses/owners?
 - She's sort of answered... :-) Who is party to the shared parking agreements? how is shared parking mandated
 - *ok will ask to refine at end if helpful*
- When can we expect a detailed transportation study and traffic flow analysis in these presentations? Laurel Grove Ln and Bush Street located immediately to the west of DSAP boundary are already experiencing gridlock. A moving van at 10am or Diridon passenger pick up at anytime have been known to trigger a parking lot situation on what is meant to be a through street connecting Park to The Alameda
- What are some examples of restorative investments? Are these project performance outcomes for short-long term economic opportunities i.e. mechanisms that support generational wealth, DBE support, apprenticeship/job placement etc.
 - *those are extremely important questions - are there ways you can connect this to the topic of creating a car-light place, such as making sure that transportation access and benefits are available to all workers, not just high-income?*
- I think we should deny the old commitment to SAP center. our climate crisis has to have us act RADICALLY different to save life on earth. so cars have got to go and commitments to car parking for sap have to be overridden based on our crisis!
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- transit needs to be electrified and free and hyperlocal with a world class bicycle and walking infrastructure. And any transit needs to be open air electrified FREE buses paid for by corporations that demand people to go to work! and anyone who can work at home full time should . Please tell MTC To not listen to the capitalists that don't care about our health. Public health needs to be our highest priority not money, not consumerism, not profit. We need to demand corporations to allow work at home forever to save our health, avoid extinction and become more resilient by staying home!!!

- *Thank you for addressing the cost question Terri!*
- How will BART be connected with Diridon Station trains and buses? (My understanding is that the BART line will terminate at Santa Clara St & 1st St.)
- Has the historical designation of any existing building around Diridon Station holding back any design options your team has explored?
 - *It's an important concern and one that we will need to address as part of environmental review (and the federal Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act). So we will need to go through the 106 process, but there will likely need to be modifications to the station in order to create the space that we need for higher future train volumes.*
 - Response: Thank you for the detail. I hope the city council can hold back on designating any further buildings as historic so as to not compromise the station design for your goals
 - *Response: Thanks Simon. Yes, the transportation needs need to be met, but we will ultimately need to come up with a solution that meets the requirements of the historic review process.*
- Thanks Eric eidlin dot they don't allow us to chat to everyone how come we should be able to chat to everyone as public comment
- I can't see the questions. How about using Q&A for questions instead of chat?
- Am I supposed to be seeing questions?
- What is being done to make bicycle commuting safer, to and through the Diridon area?
- With the increased pedestrian traffic, is the City committed to funding the enforcement to keep scooters and bikes off of sidewalks?
- Is Google planning to have their own private shuttles (like to their Mountain View campus), or will they work with VTA and the City of San José to get more people to use all the transit options at Diridon?
- Early in the presentation, the speaker mentioned potential height limit increases which would allow for 7,000 more houses. Given that SJ has historically strict limits on building heights in downtown areas, are these building height plans ... plans? or already voted upon?
- Well said - especially on emphasizing local benefits
- FYI, that last slide - right side was too tiny to read. better to split it into two slides; just before "Success Factors for Diridon Program"
- Can Google/waymo include Diridon area into their Robotaxi service area (similar to Chandler, AZ)?
 - *good question, not sure if the SJ folk know, will ask if they do*
 - *There are also some Google folk who signed up, not sure if they know :-)*
- I am sure every question is absolutely fantastic. Where are these questions?
- I've noticed that among all the metrics here there hasn't been any mention of the most important two metrics for individual drivers: COST of a trips, and DURATION of trips. Do these agencies plan to optimize any of these, especially during moments of low congestion (I'm a resident)? If not, I might consider this plan a total loss for my own personal travel.

- *some of this relates to cost of parking that Terri talked about, and some what Ian's talking about*
- For Ian, under the fare zone approach you may end up with short urban trips subsidizing long, suburban trips which potentially has equity implications. How are you approaching this?
- The Diridon integrated hub design was completed about 3 years before the DISConnected concept started.
- There is no need to "integrate" fares. The only thing passengers care about is the A to B experience. The key to success is to make the disparate fares transparent to the riders <https://bigplanbigchanges.co.uk/straight-answers>
- That "Dutch firm" is about as useless as it gets. Where is the intermodal integration in Rotterdam Zentrall????
- Would transit users see an increase in their transit costs when commuting to somewhere such as Diridon or is the plan to maintain similar costs? *transit users from Gilroy
- Will rail transit ever connect to San Jose airport? Or only bus, taxi, rideshare?
- Connect to the topic...restorative investments was mentioned on the slide. I am asking how is the project using that term "restorative" and what are some investments being considered?
- For Eric and Lori: Is there a particular station district elsewhere in the world that inspired the Diridon plan?
- I still have concerns about the importance of trip duration in this enterprise. Is the plan to sacrifice trip speed (driving) for the sake of land use and sustainability? I love sustainability, but if it takes 40 mins on transit where a car trip would take 15 mins, I will drive my hybrid every time.
- *There are some fantastic questions we will get to :-)*
- Can you link those docs (EIR) in the chat?
 - *DSAP environmental document:*
<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/planning-building-code-enforcement/planning-division/environmental-planning/environmental-review/diridon-station-area-plan-amendment>
 - *Downtown West environmental documents:*
<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/department-directory/planning-building-code-enforcement/planning-division/environmental-planning/environmental-review/active-eirs/downtown-west-mixed-use-plan>
- Lori, the transportation section is insufficient for the area immediately west of DSAP. Increased gridlock is occurring on Laurel Grove Lane and Bush Street. I'd like to see what any increase is suppose to look like. We're getting more push back from Cahill area residents. 10:25am Friday had us the two lane traffic blocked as in parking lot. Moving van plus Diridon passenger pick up stopped the flow. It's happening more and more and residents are getting frustrated. Can't imagine increased traffic

- *These are the equity indicators of the Downtown Transportation Plan: Fair protection; Fair enforcement; Fair investment; Fair housing; Fair maintenance; Fair use of public space; Fair access to transit*
 - *Fair protection: Track safety outcomes by race, income and geography and compare crash types and involvement by mode of travel relative to their activity levels and citywide demographics.*
 - *Fair enforcement: Track all traffic stops and use of force by race and compare how many people in each racial group receive traffic citations relative to their proportion of the population of San Jose.*
 - *Fair investment: Track investment in transportation improvements and maintenance in neighborhoods and compare investments by population by race, income and geography.*
 - *Fair housing: Track residential displacement in relationship to transportation investment. Are improvements correlated with increased displacement, rising rents, evictions, or home prices?*
 - *Fair maintenance: Track impacts of transportation maintenance and improvements on the unhoused population.*
 - *Fair use of public space: Track event participation and use of public spaces. Survey and visually scan for indicators of diversity and inclusivity downtown, for instance art, culture, businesses, activities, and who is using public space (for instance intergenerational families).*
 - *Fair access to transit: Track demographics of transit users in and out of downtown and compare to neighborhood and employment demographics near transit stops and stations.*