



South San Francisco BART Transit Village Plan

Zoning District Standards & Design Guidelines

Prepared for the City of South San Francisco by:

Van Meter Williams Pollack
Keyser Marston, Associates
and
Dyett & Bhatia

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Executive Summary

The *South San Francisco General Plan*, adopted in October 1999, called for the development of the BART station area as a “vital pedestrian-oriented center, with intensity and a mix of uses that complement the area’s new role as a regional center. The *South San Francisco BART Transit Village Plan* is an area plan that includes zoning standards, design guidelines, and implementation recommendations to realize this vision.

The *Transit Village Plan* comes at a time when significant change is already under way in the area, and it is anticipated that the area will continue to experience further change with the opening of the BART station and the addition of new housing. In addition to the *General Plan* process, several other planning processes have occurred within the Transit Village area in the past several years, underscoring the amount of activity and development pressures that already exist. These include the *BART Station Plan and EIR*, the *Hickey [McLellan] Boulevard Extension Plan and EIR*, the *El Camino Corridor Redevelopment Plan and EIR*, the *Costco Plan and EIR*, and most recently the *SamTrans South San Francisco BART Station Concept Plan*. It is the intent of the *Transit Village Plan* to incorporate their recommendations and policies to the extent feasible, to recommend alternatives where appropriate, and to create a clear framework upon which future change can be managed and directed in order to ensure an outcome consistent with the *General Plan* goals for the area.

The *Transit Village Plan* recommends major traffic engineering and streetscape design changes to two streets in the area - McLellan Drive and Mission Road - as the basic elements of the pedestrian-focused village. The lane configurations, width, and design of these streets become the structure for future development and dictate the potential nature and character of the place. Access to the BART station area is central to the development of the *Transit Village Plan*, and it is the intent of this plan to create opportunities for automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian access through a circulation network of well-designed, safe streets and open space bicycle and pedestrian paths.

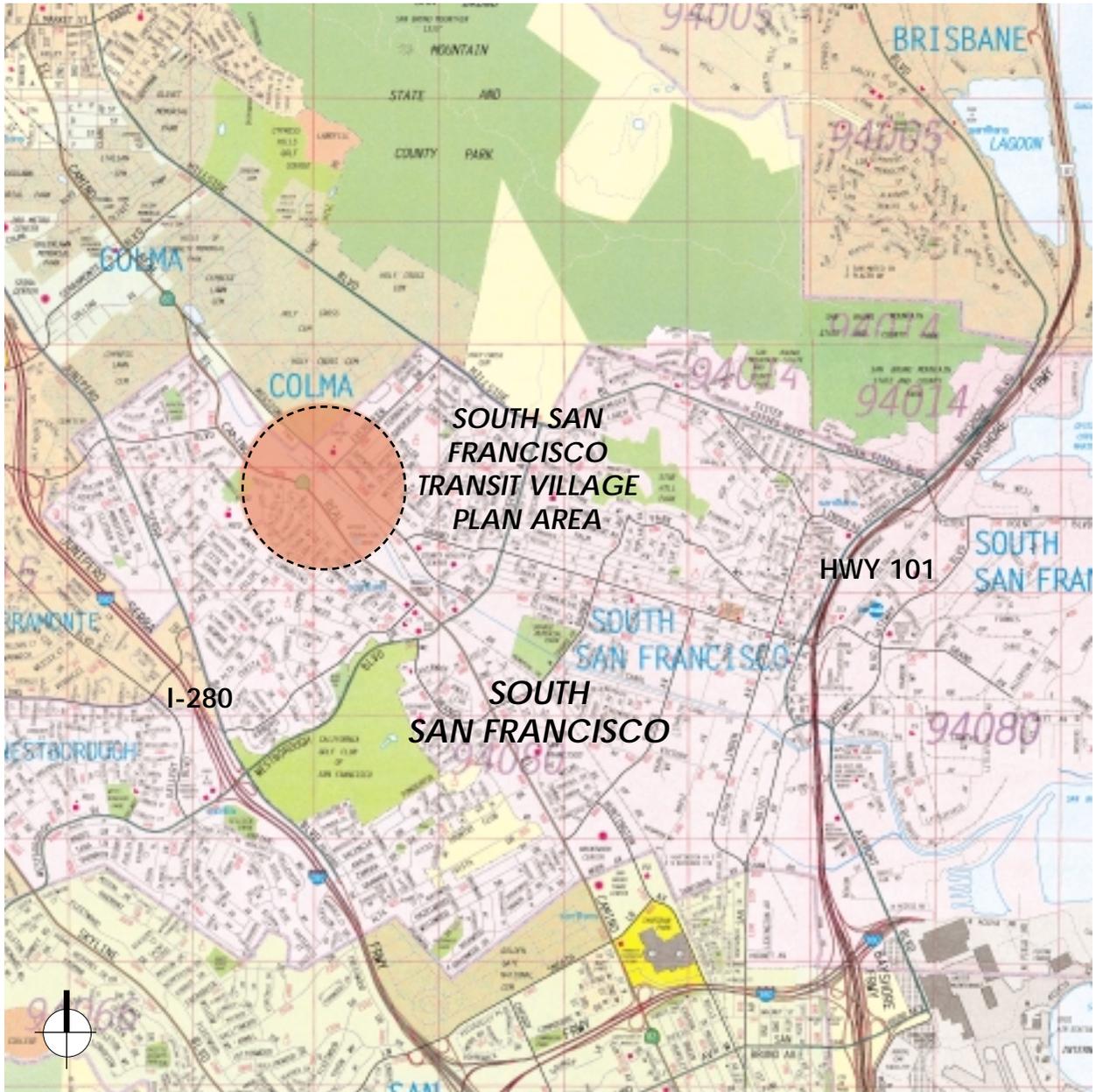
New, mixed-use housing will develop in response to the ease of access to public transportation, and will have higher residential densities and lower parking requirements than in other areas in South San Francisco. Automobiles in new development will be downplayed in the *Transit Village* area. Resident parking will be in podium structures, or behind townhomes and accessed by shared driveways. Stoops, porches, front doors, and landscaping will activate and enliven the sidewalk edge. Neighborhood amenities such as a day care facility and some smaller retail and commercial services will be focused along McLellan Drive as per the *General Plan’s* policy to develop it as a “pedestrian-oriented spine fronted by active uses.”

The major components of the *Transit Village Plan* are Circulation & Street Design, Open Space, and Development & Architecture. The planning area covers approximately a one-half mile radius from the BART Station, and consists of the BART Station and Parking Garage (opening scheduled for 2002), about 40 acres of development or potential development land, areas of the adjacent Sunshine Gardens, Buri Buri, and Promenade neighborhoods, and a circulation and open space network that includes the linear right-of-way along the BART tracks, and several smaller plazas and parks associated with new development.

The *Transit Village Plan* ties existing and new residential neighborhoods, commercial uses, transit facilities, parks and nearby schools together in a safe, convenient, and walkable environment for residents, employees, and visitors to the area. Zoning and Standards, Design Guidelines, and Implementation recommendations are provided to assist the City and property owners in designing and developing new projects that meet the most important urban design principles of the *Transit Village Plan*.



1. INTRODUCTION & PROJECT BACKGROUND



Location Map

1.1 Location & Context

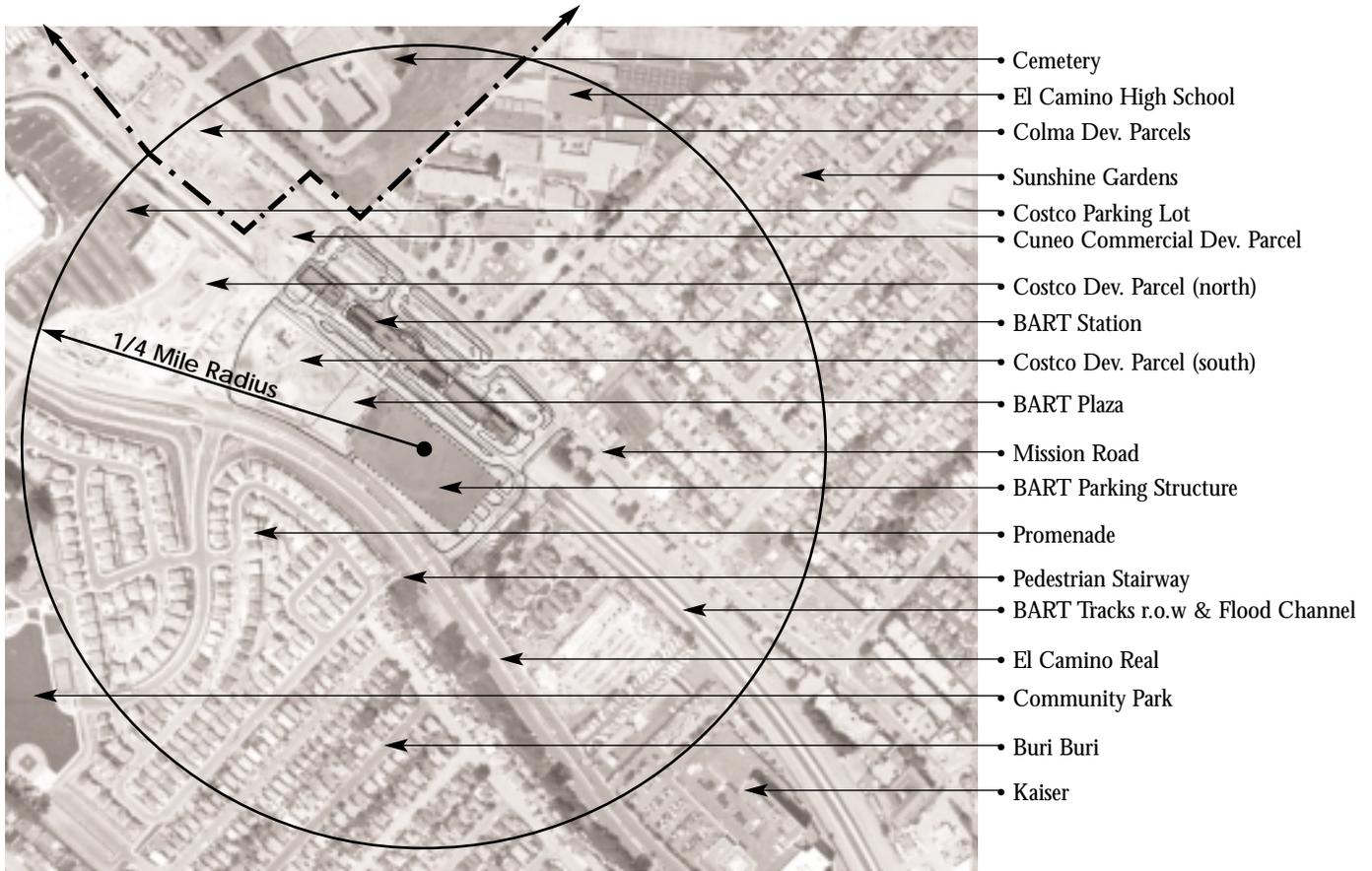
The *South San Francisco BART Transit Village Plan* area consists of the approximately 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius area around the new BART station. This distance is based on the accepted increment of the 1/4 mile or 5-minute walking distance that is loosely used in planning to determine a comfortable walking distance for most pedestrians. In many cases, pedestrians will walk further, and so the policies and guidelines in this plan may and should be appropriately extended to beyond the boundaries of this circle.



The BART Transit Village Area from the 1999 South San Francisco General Plan

The plan area is served by freeway I-280, and the regional arterial El Camino Real runs directly through - virtually bisecting - it. Mission Road is a local collector that is not too heavily used, but experiences back-ups during peak hours. It is continuous between Chestnut and El Camino Real, and it also connects to Grand Avenue which leads into downtown South San Francisco.

The BART station is scheduled to open in Spring of 2002, along with the San Bruno, Airport, and Millbrae Stations. At this time McLellan Drive, between El Camino Real and Mission Road will also open. The Hickey Boulevard extension from Mission Road to Hillside Boulevard is also expected to be operational at this time. SamTrans also serves the area and will be consolidating a number of its stops at the BART-to-bus transfer stalls within the new BART Station area. At this time no current information exists regarding changes to the SamTrans service, and they currently anticipate no additional routes for the station area. Some stops may be consolidated in the station itself, and neighborhood stops will be maintained.



Plan Area Context

The plan area is currently extremely auto-oriented, but with the introduction of BART and the land use and urban design policies set forth in this document, it has the potential to become easily accessible on foot or by bicycle as well. Streets will be designed to be safer for pedestrians and bicyclists, even where bike lanes do not exist, and the BART tracks right-of-way will eventually become a linear park with a multi-use pathway for bikes and pedestrian recreational and commuter use.

The plan area is surrounded by medium to large lot, single family neighborhoods: Sunshine Gardens, Buri Buri and the new Promenade neighborhood. The Buri Buri and the Promenade neighborhoods sit on the southwest embankment above the El Camino Real. The width of this road and its heavy traffic, along with the topography change at this edge create a significant separation for these two neighborhoods from the BART station.



Topography and the El Camino Real separate the Promenade and Buri Buri neighborhoods from the BART Transit Village.

Although the distance is walkable, the design of the pedestrian connections from these neighborhoods will not likely encourage maximum pedestrian access to the *Transit Village*. The Sunshine Gardens neighborhood is directly across from the main pedestrian entry to the BART station on Mission Road and is expected to provide a large percentage of pedestrian activity in the *Transit Village*.

El Camino High School is in Sunshine Gardens and sits across Mission Rd. to the northeast of the BART station. The Sunshine Gardens Elementary School is on the edge of the 1/4 mile boundary of the plan area, as well as the Alta Loma Middle School, behind the Promenade neighborhood. The majority of pedestrian activity with the *Transit Village* by schools is expected to be from the El Camino High School.

The *Transit Village* does have some park access. Alta Loma park is adjacent to the Alta Loma Middle School on the west side of El Camino Real, and the playground at the Sunshine Gardens Elementary School provides a small park for the Sunshine Gardens neighborhood. Both parks sit about 1/4 mile from the station.

Several commercial uses exist in and near the *Transit Village*, including a new regional commercial center and several aging neighborhood shopping centers. The newly opened Costco is within the 1/4 mile planning area, and creates some challenges to the development of a “pedestrian-oriented” district, with its huge parking needs and the amount of traffic generated by its operations. However, and for the purposes of this plan, it is anticipated that the operations of this big box retailer will be finite, and that in the long-term future this land will eventually be amalgamated into the *Transit Village*.

The Winston Manor shopping center at the intersection of Hickey Boulevard and El Camino Real is a community center with an asian supermarket as the anchor retailer. A Bell Market at the Buri Buri Shopping Center on El Camino Real at Westborough Boulevard, and a Safeway at the



The Sunshine Gardens Shopping Center on Mission between Sequoia and Holly was identified as an important amenity by the community.

Chestnut Center on Chestnut and Antoinette Lane serve the *Transit Village* neighborhoods as well.

The Sunshine Gardens Shopping Center is a neighborhood center on Mission between Sequoia and Holly and is anchored by a second-hand store, with a laundry, a drug store, and a popular restaurant.

Few, if any substantive commercial services currently exist within the 1/4 mile walking distance of any of the neighborhoods in the *Transit Village*.

1.2 Existing Conditions

The following summarizes the existing conditions of the *Transit Village* area, beginning with the key policies established in the General Plan adopted in October of 1999. These bullets provide a broad overview and evaluation of both the physical state of places in the plan area, the current status of existing designs and engineering plans, existing policies, and the attitudes, goals, and concerns of various stakeholders as garnered from meetings and presentations with the TAC, the Subcommittee - including key members of the Planning Commission and the Design Review committee, and the Community.

General Plan Policies for the *Transit Village* area

- Establish Transit-oriented development requirements
- Minimum development density/intensity requirements
- Inclusion of Child Care Facilities
- Develop Costco parcels as Mixed-use developments
- McLellan as pedestrian-oriented street fronted by active uses
- Public Improvements focused on Streetscape and Pedestrian-oriented design
- Work with BART to:
 - improve pedestrian connections to high school, and
 - develop linear park/bikeway along BART tracks right-of-way
- Strive to meet ABAG projections for Housing Mix and Affordability

BART Station

- Station is under construction, and completion is scheduled for Fall 2002.
- Recommended changes included in the *Transit Village Plan* at this time will be subject to particular constraints due to Design-Build nature of project.
- Costco parcels are currently being used as batch plant during station construction.
- BART real estate is evaluating routing for multi-use path along tracks r.o.w. for entire South Bay extension, including segment within *Transit Village Area*. BART has agreed to include a multi-use bike/ped path along the west sidewalk of Mission Rd. as a connector between the north and south segments of the linear park.



Birdseye view of the rear of BART station overlooking the El Camino Real and the BART Plaza

- BART agrees to provide Pedestrian/Bike crosswalk and entrance to the station at the “Linear Park” on the south side of the station (across BART Access Rd. 1).
- BART agrees to provide a multi-use bike/ped pathway within the area of the sidewalk in front of the station facing Mission Rd. The Consultant team also recommends that this path be continued west along McLellan Dr. to allow park users to cross at the signalized intersection of McLellan Drive and BART Access Rd. 2.
- The Consultant Team identifies the “front” of Station facing Mission Road. In the *Transit Village* the “front” is the station face that is the most accessible to pedestrians. The “rear” of the station is the side that provides mainly vehicular access, and is at El Camino Real.
- The BART Plaza, situated facing El Camino Real between the BART Parking Structure and the southern Costco development parcel, provides a view to the BART station from El Camino Real, however the parking Structure will be very large, and will block views to station except at close range.
- The intent of the BART Plaza was that it would be the central community gathering place in the *Transit Village*. The space was envisioned with formal and informal pedestrian activity.
- The Consultant Team feels that the planned BART Plaza has poor pedestrian access from El Camino Real and may be underutilized in its current configuration as a very large “hard-scaped” formal plaza. It is recommended that the plaza be “softened” with a significant green space/park area, that will encourage regular use by the future adjacent residents, as well as the greater community.
- It is understood that the northwest parking lot at corner Mission and McLellan Dr. will be available for student drop-off during designated morning hours. This must be verified with BART engineering.
- BART agreed to stripe a pedestrian mid-block crosswalks across Mission at intersection with the Kiss & Ride/Bus Transfer access, but will not provide a signal at this location.
- The Consultant Team does support the striping of a mid-block crosswalk. They do not support a pedestrian diverter and feel that it will not control jaywalking.
- A traffic signal will be installed at the Mission/Evergreen/BART intersection.
- BART Access Rd. 2 exits from the station to McLellan Drive at a signalized intersection.
- The Consultant Team anticipates that landscaping provided by BART at the station will be of a lower quality than that which is recommended in the Streetscape Guidelines in the *South San Francisco BART Transit Village Plan*.

Plan Area Circulation and Access

The plan area is served by the following:

- I-280, I-380, and US 101;
- El Camino Real, a regional arterial maintained by the State as SR-82;
- Mission Road, a minor arterial continuous between Chestnut (south) and El Camino Real (north);
- BART,
- SamTrans; and
- the McLellan Drive/Hickey Boulevard extension.

McLellan Dr. (El Camino Real to Mission Rd.)/Hickey Blvd. Extension (Mission to Hillside Blvd.)

- McLellan Drive will be built by BART during the final stages of completion for the station.
- Designs for narrowing the proposed 6-lane roadway with no parking to a 4-lane roadway with parking are currently under evaluation, and are recommended in this Plan.
- The construction of the Hickey Blvd. extension will be led by San Mateo County, in cooperation with the Town of Colma and the City of South San Francisco.
- The status for completion of the Hickey Boulevard is at this time not finalized, but it is understood that it will be before or at the same time as the BART station opening.
- The Hickey Blvd. roadway is designed as one lane in each direction for 3000 linear feet between Hillside Boulevard and Mission Road, where it widens to accommodate turns.
- The Consultant Team anticipates that this road will be subject to speeding traffic between Hillside and Mission, and currently there is no evidence of any traffic calming devices installed at any point along the roadway.
- This plan makes recommendations for traffic calming along a segment of Hickey Boulevard near the Mission Road intersection.

Plan Area Streetscape

- Generally, streets in the plan area are wide and fairly bleak in appearance.
- El Camino Real carries fast-moving traffic, and pedestrian crossings are poorly signed, weakly signaled, and often difficult to see by drivers. Sidewalks are narrow where they exist, and there is a lack of a sense of pedestrian safety.
- Existing medians on El Camino Real are poorly landscaped and accomplish little to improve the visual quality of the street, or its pedestrian safety.
- Mission Rd. traffic lanes are wide, and sidewalks are very narrow, and in some locations do not even exist at all. There is very little landscaping, and the west sidewalks are bisected by closely spaced utility poles. This condition not only is a visual blight, but results in sidewalks that do not meet ADA requirements.
- Neighborhood streets are generally wide, have narrow sidewalks, no landscaping, and encourage cut-through and speeding traffic.



El Camino Real is a wide, Regional thoroughfare that is not pedestrian-oriented in a way supportive of the Transit Village.



Mission Road is a local street that runs between the new BART station and the Sunshine Gardens neighborhood.

Neighborhoods, Schools, and Open Space

- Three neighborhoods lie adjacent to the plan area: Sunshine Gardens, the new Promenade, and Buri Buri.
- It is anticipated that residents from all of these neighborhoods will benefit from the BART station and the *Transit Village's* amenities, however due to the difficulty of traversing both topography and the El Camino Real, Promenade and Buri Buri residents are expected to walk or bike less than Sunshine Gardens residents.
- Pedestrian connections to the *Transit Village* area from Buri Buri and the Promenade are very weak.
- There is one, utilitarian stairway that connects from Buri Buri to the El Camino Real. Its permanent connection to the Promenade neighborhood is unclear, as it is locked at some times. At the base of the stairway on El Camino Real, there is a unsignalized pedestrian crossing that has poor visibility from the roadway.
- With the opening of BART, there will be a new signalized crossing at this location, the intersection with BART Access Rd. 1 and El Camino Real, which will greatly improve the visibility and safety of the pedestrian crossing at the stairway, and it is anticipated that the signal timing and intersection at the McLellan Dr. intersection will be improved as well.
- Promenade residents, if not using the stairway, must access El Camino Real and the station along the circuitous network of its interior streets.
- Alta Loma Middle School and the Sunshine Gardens School lie just on the edge of the 1/4 mile boundary of the plan area.
- Two community parks exists near the plan area, adjacent to Alta Loma Middle School and the Sunshine Gardens school.
- The status of a planned “Linear Park” with pedestrian and bicycle paths along the BART tunnel right-of-way is unclear, but it is expected that it will be finalized through its on-going process within BART.



This Pedestrian Stairway to the Buri Buri neighborhood provides the most direct link to the El Camino Real. The pedestrian crossing, however, is currently unsignalized and difficult to see by drivers.



The view from the top of the stairway, overlooking El Camino Real shows the complexity of traversing the topography change and then the roadway in order to get to the station.



When the gate to the stairway is locked, the walk from the Promenade Neighborhood to the BART station requires a circuitous route through the neighborhood, the climb down to El Camino Real, the crossing of El Camino Real, and finally walking along the sidewalk to the BART Plaza and entry.

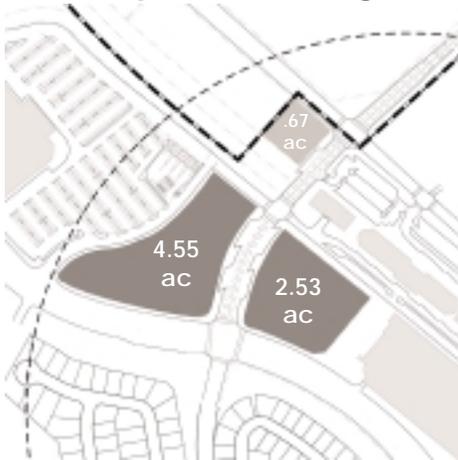


This view of Station Area from Promenade overlooks El Camino Real to the BART parking structure, the station, and the neighborhoods and hills beyond.

Neighborhood Concerns

- Currently Sunshine Gardens experiences cut-through and speeding traffic on Holly and Evergreen Dr. between Hillside Blvd. and Mission Rd. It is anticipated that the new Hickey Blvd. extension will displace much of this cut-through traffic, but residents remain concerned about ease of access, continued speeding and cut-through traffic.
- Residents remain concerned and dubious about the actual opening date for the Hickey Boulevard extension, and are not convinced that it will open on time, before or with the BART station.
- There is a general perception that there will be heavy parking burdens placed on the neighborhoods by the opening of BART. Buri Buri residents and Sunshine Gardens residents have been undergoing a planning process with the Police Department to establish a permit parking program in advance of the opening of the BART station.
- Residents generally like the idea of traffic calming in their neighborhoods.
- The El Camino High School is adjacent to the BART station, and there is concern about potential pedestrian-vehicle conflicts between students and heavy traffic on Mission Road.
- It is assumed that the pedestrian stairway from Buri Buri neighborhood is not used as well as it could be because of the unsafe pedestrian crossing at El Camino Real. It is currently unsignalized and difficult for drivers to see.

1.3 Anticipated Change in the Transit Village



Development Parcels between the Costco and the BART station are expected to develop within the next 5 years. The parcel at the corner of Mission and McLellan is also expected to change.



Major development parcels exist directly adjacent to the BART station, providing excellent opportunities for new housing with ground floor retail uses at the center of the BART Transit Village area.

Change in the Transit Village Center

Within the plan area, there are 30 to 40 acres of land that may see developmental change over the next 5 to 25 years, some much sooner than others. Two parcels, currently owned by Costco and adjacent to the BART station, total about 7 acres, and are expected to be the fastest changing, as well as the most critical parcels in defining the character of the *Transit Village* as a pedestrian focused center. These two parcels together will define the built edge of much of McLellan Drive, which will become the focus “main street” in the plan area.

Also expected to develop near the station and on McLellan Drive, is a .67 acre parcel at the corner of Mission Road. The appropriate development of this parcel is crucial to the identity of the *Transit Village*, as it marks the entry to McLellan Drive from Mission Road and the Hickey Blvd. extension. It is recommended that this parcel be developed in coordination with the adjacent parcels on Mission Road in the Town of Colma, in order to realize its greatest development potential. This corner site is the City staff’s preferred location for a day care facility.



View to the .67 acre parcel at Mission & McLellan.



View to the future McLellan Drive and the Costco Parcels

1.3 Anticipated Change in the Transit Village



Major development parcels exist directly adjacent to the BART station, providing excellent opportunities for new housing with ground floor retail uses at the center of the BART Transit Village area.



1410 El Camino Real is directly adjacent and to the south of the BART station and parking structure. Its location makes it a prime candidate for higher density Transit Village housing, with opportunities for small ground floor commercial uses.

Changes South of the BART Station Area

South of the BART station, a 1.26 acre parcel at 1410 El Camino Real is adjacent to the BART station and currently underutilized. It is anticipated that this parcel will see new development in the near future, and it is envisioned as mainly residential, with some ground floor commercial use facing El Camino Real, with parking contained in a podium structure. The 3.47 acre parcel at 1350 El Camino Real, currently Broadmore Lumber, is also likely to experience market pressures for re-development to a higher and better use for the area. Similarly, this parcel would also be multi-family residential on podium, with ground floor commercial on El Camino Real. Finally, it is anticipated that there may be a change in the parcel at 1330 El Camino Real, currently the Days Inn. This parcel could remain as a hotel, but it is also an appropriate location for additional offices and parking for Kaiser.

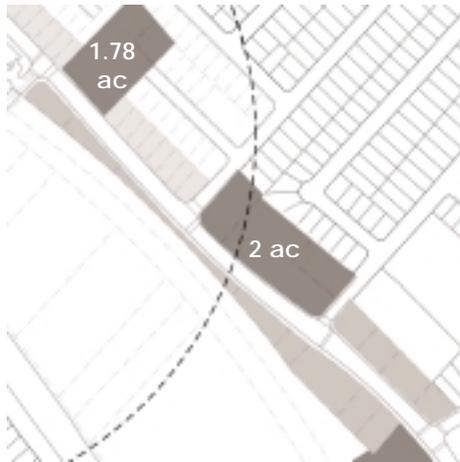


The Sunshine Gardens Shopping Center and the adjacent vacant parcel could create an opportunity for redevelopment into a new active center for the neighborhood.

Changes on Mission Road

Along Mission Rd. it is also anticipated that there will be some market pressures for change at certain parcels. Three parcels, totalling about 1.78 acres, between Evergreen and Sequoia sit directly across from the intersection with BART Access Rd. 1, facing Mission Rd. These parcels are underutilized, and could be assembled and used to serve low- to medium-density townhomes facing Mission Rd., with single family townhomes behind.

1.3 Anticipated Change in the Transit Village



It is anticipated that some parcels along Mission Rd. may change in the next 5 to 15 years. The darker parcels illustrate those expected to change the soonest.



Multiple curb-cuts serving single family homes on Mission Road contribute to potential traffic conflicts. New zoning along Mission will provide for multi-family housing and shared driveway access.

This development could be unique in establishing a new image along Mission Road, with groups of individual and multi-family residential units that share a common driveway off of Mission Road, with internal circulation provide to access parking behind. This will reduce the potential for conflicts that currently exists between Mission Road through traffic and cars needing to pull into or out of the many driveways that exist there now. A slightly higher intensity of residential development on Mission, such as townhomes, will help to create a physical, visual, and noise barrier to the lower density, single family residences in Sunshine Gardens.

A number of existing commercial parcels and one vacant parcel totalling about 2 acres, between Sequoia Avenue and Grand Avenue may experience a push to redevelop in the longer-term future. The Sunshine Gardens Shopping Center at the corner of Holly and Mission was identified as an amenity by the residents of Sunshine Gardens, and this collection of parcels could be redeveloped as a mixed-use development with ground floor commercial spaces, small offices or residences above, and multi-family townhomes. Parking for all uses is behind the principal buildings, with a shared driveway access from Mission Road and the side roads.

1.3 Anticipated Change in the Transit Village



Parcels on the west side of Mission Rd. back up to the BART row, and future Linear Park. New residential and commercial development on these parcels will look upon this park as an amenity.



From the Linear Park, looking across Mission Rd. opportunities for new housing, neighborhood commercial, and strong pedestrian and bicycle connections between the park and neighborhood are very clear.

Parcels on the west side of Mission Road consist of somewhat outmoded office buildings and several residential buildings. The backs of these parcels look over the BART tracks r.o.w. which is expected to become a linear park and community recreational amenity. Based on current market evaluations, it is anticipated that these parcels will transition to single- and multi-family residential uses over time. Transit Village zoning will allow for some opportunities for ground floor commercial or home office use.

All existing uses in the Transit Village remain as "conforming uses" until such time as the market encourages change. The general "up-zoning" of land in the Transit Village allows for more intense uses and adds value to the land when redevelopment does occur.

1.4 Directing Change to Benefit the Community

While the market will likely shift and change between now and the time that these parcels will redevelop, the overriding principle of *The South San Francisco BART Transit Village Plan* is to establish basic guiding criteria through new zoning and design guidelines that will ensure quality developments and a well-defined public realm throughout the Transit Village.

Ultimately, however, the main force to guide change in the *Transit Village* will be the City. Staff, Planning Commission, City Council and the South San Francisco Community will be required to actively seek out and encourage the best developments, the best land uses, and the best public amenities for the area.

The implementation of the *Transit Village* Area Plan will require, first and foremost, the City to take an active lead in organizing and coordinating existing and proposed efforts, which at a minimum include the following:

1. Define the City's vision for the *Transit Village*.
2. Identify potential catalyst projects for the implementation of the *Transit Village*.
3. Work with property owners to encourage property owner participation in the *Transit Village*. Coordination between property owners and possibly some parcel aggregation can result in significant development opportunities. Promote projects that are consistent with the *Transit Village* vision.
4. Continue to identify and prioritize actions needed to support and implement the Transit Village Area Plan such as:
 - Undertake public streetscape improvements & traffic calming measures;
 - Develop public open spaces, particularly the BART Linear Park; and
 - Actively pursue commercial development in the *Transit Village*, by attracting and supporting the appropriate members of the development community.

Implementation mechanisms available to the City include, but are not limited to, the role of Redevelopment, including the types of projects that can be undertaken by the Agency to facilitate the implementation of the Plan, a strategy to achieve commercial development requirements per the Plan and, finally, various financing mechanisms. Refer to Section 4 for specific strategies for implementation as they relate to specific locations within the *Transit Village* plan area.

