



# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER



Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design

## Transit Center Planning Context November 2020



**SAN RAFAEL**  
THE CITY WITH A MISSION



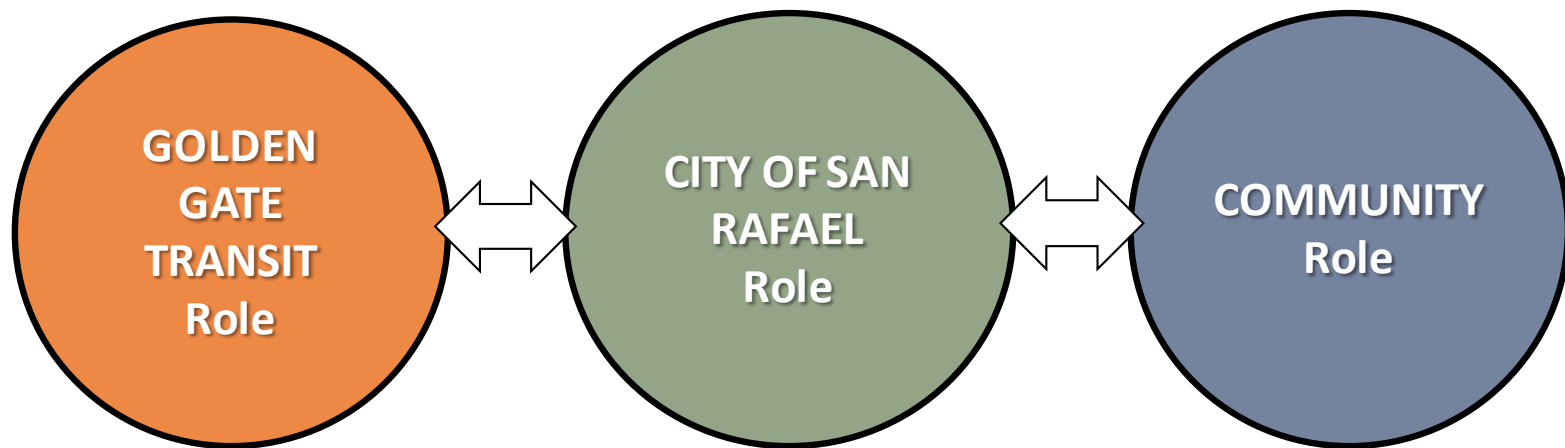


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**Creating a long term, fully integrated Transit Center will require on-going partnerships and clarifying roles and responsibilities.**



- **Transit facility design and operation**
- **Public amenities w/in project footprint**
- **Fronting street improvements (as identified in environmental documents)**
- **Disposition of existing transit center site**
- **Downtown planning vision**
- **Street improvements *connecting to facility***
- **Supporting private Transit Oriented Development**
- **Public realm opportunities adjacent to site**
- **Transit oriented development projects, new programs**



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**There are many resources exploring aspects of the Transit Center Site, some of the key documents are listed below.**

**The currently in-progress General Plan Update and Downtown Precise Plan update are good places to start. <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/departments/planning/>**

*Downtown San Rafael Station Area Plan (2012)*

*Climate Adaptation – Sea Level Rise White Paper (2014)*

*Good Design Guidelines (2017)*

*Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan (2018)*

*Downtown Precise Plan, Downtown Profile Report (2019)*

*General Plan 2040 Update (2020)*

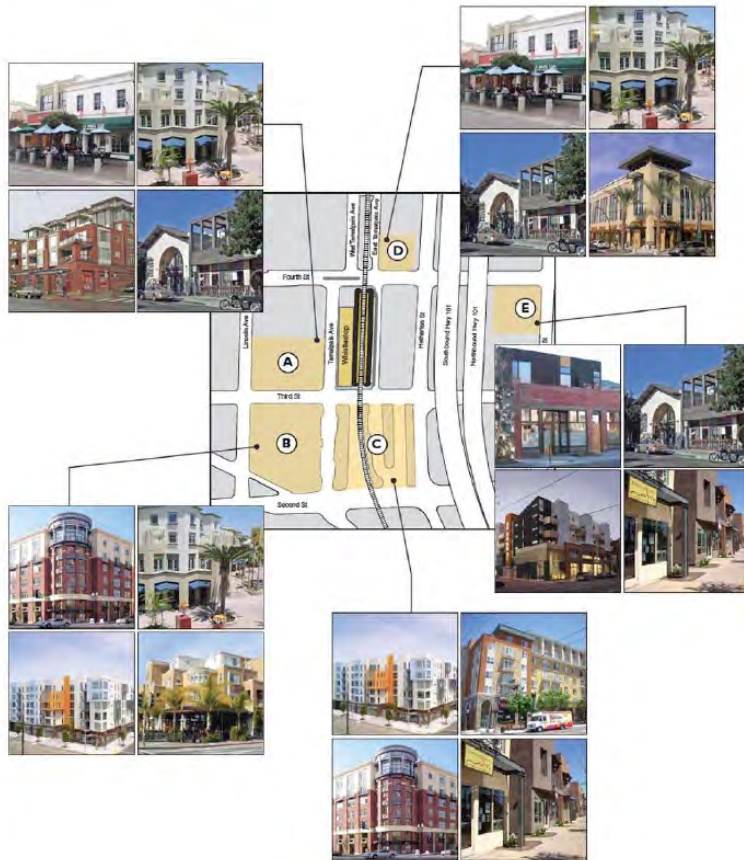


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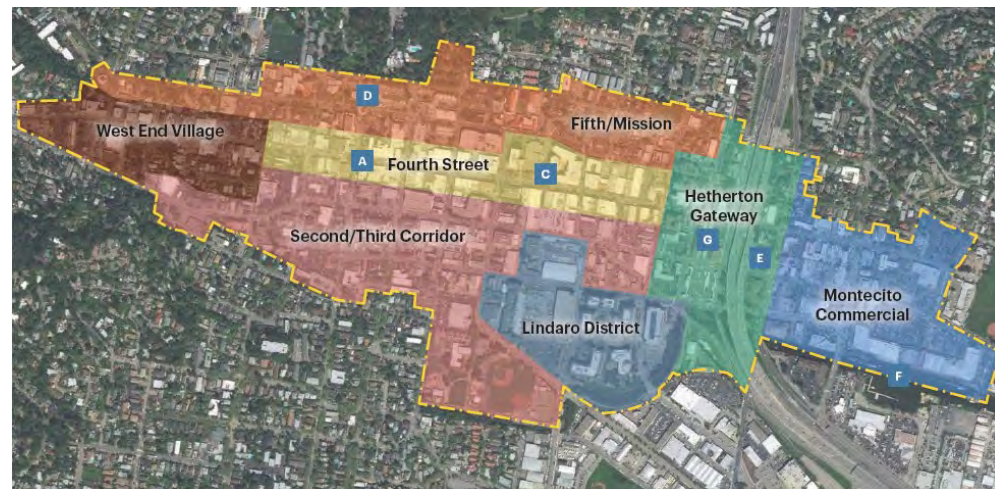
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The goal to improve the Transit Center location as a well-integrated downtown gateway has been the consistent for some time. This concept was outlined in the 2012 Station Area Plan.



“At the heart of this area is a regional transit complex that *fits seamlessly into the context of the surrounding neighborhoods* and connects people to destinations throughout San Rafael, Marin, and the greater Bay Area” **Station Area Plan, 2012**





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The idea was further refined in design guidelines seeking to reactivate streets around the center.

## “Good Design” Guidelines for Downtown (2017)

### Hetherton Gateway District:

- Target specific historic resources in the district for preservation including the former railroad depot and residences fronting 5th Ave
- Enhance the Tamalpais greenway from 2nd to Mission as a complete street
- **Anchor the district with a high quality transit center**
- Provide **active street fronts along Tamalpais**
- Articulate elevations to avoid a “building as wall” parallel to the freeway
- Create a **sense of arrival with welcoming gateway elements** such as:
  - Distinctive building form massing and detailing
  - Public plazas
  - Creek restoration
  - Improved pedestrian experience under the freeway



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**The Downtown Precise Plan explores street and public realm improvements to ensure the Transit Center is well connected. The three options contribute to this vision in different ways. Which one best balances transit function with the downtown objectives?**

*Excerpt from the Downtown Precise Plan, Downtown Options Report, City of San Rafael (2019)*

Ideas listed in the Precise Plan for this area:

1. Transit-oriented development integrates the historic Whistlestop building <sup>(a)</sup>
2. New SMART station public plaza extends north till 5th Avenue, links to the new 4th Street Shared Street: wayfinding strategies for orienting visitors
3. Bettini Transit Center relocation: several options currently under review
4. New Transit Center Relocation Area  
Traffic calming and enhanced bicycle facilities improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity on 3rd and 4W Streets
5. New mixed-use buildings with active ground floor uses enliven sidewalks and the new transit center plaza
6. Small lot infill development provides additional housing close to transit
7. Podium and detached buildings fill in Ritter Street...

<sup>(a)</sup> Note: Whistlestop has not been officially designated a significantly historic structure.





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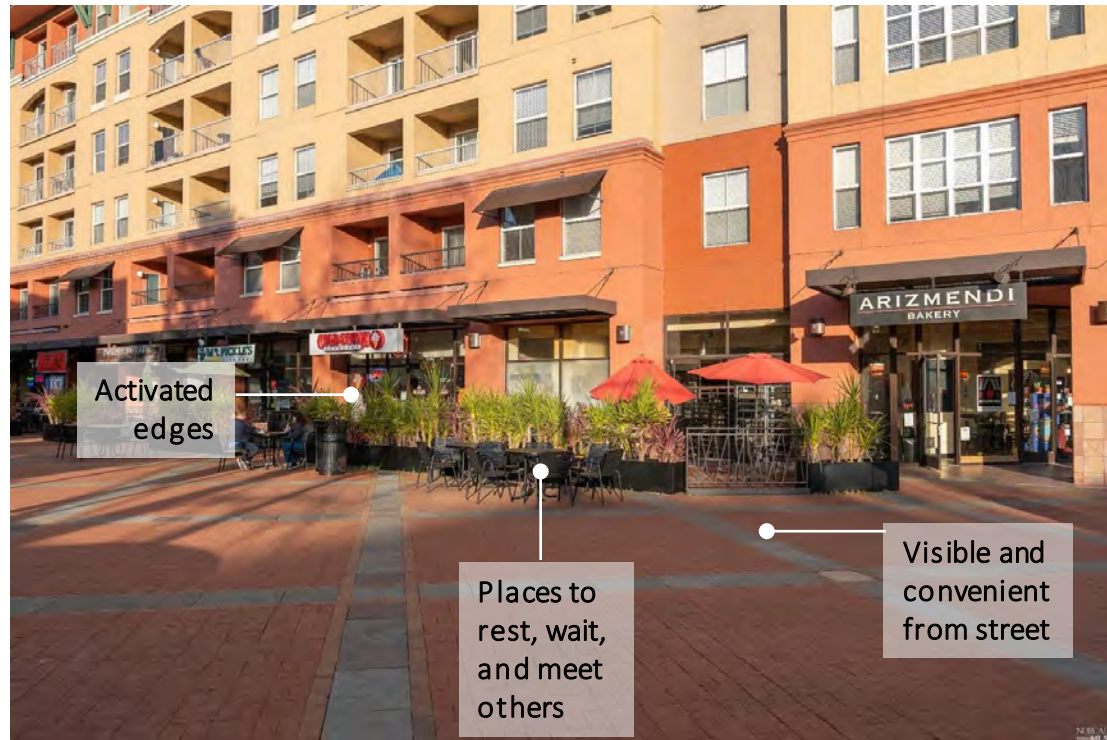


## What Could the Transit Center Look Like?

- The current focus is on *scale*, *location* and *placement* of passenger amenity features, and selecting the **preferred location** for the site.
- Design treatments such as those shown below (paving, lighting, landscape, and placemaking elements) will be developed in later design stages for the selected alternative



Patasouras Bus Facility L.A. (above)  
Health Line BRT, Cleveland (below)



San Rafael City Plaza (along 4<sup>th</sup> Street)



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**A series of design principles will also guide the transit center design.**

**Placemaking** - Create a welcoming, attractive, memorable, vibrant place for all users that reflects San Rafael's history and culture, and enhances the city's economy - using café spaces, visitor information, public art, landscaping, lighting, plaza materials, transit architecture and other design elements that help incorporate the facility into San Rafael's urban fabric.

**Universal Design** - Develop access to transportation services through universal design, with a focus on accessibility, wayfinding, and safe and clear paths of travel. Provide weather-protected and comfortable accommodations and amenities for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Transportation System Operations** - Improve traveler safety, convenience and connectivity between all modes: bus movements, bus transfers, bike/ped access, SMART, and pick-up/drop-off

**Sustainable Design** - Improve storm water treatment, energy efficiency, and other sustainability goals using durable and environmentally-sound materials.

**Durability and Maintenance** – Consider safety, cleanliness, and long-term maintenance needs in design



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There are many ways to design a transit center that will be singular to San Rafael. The following slides reflect some possibilities for inspiration.





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## Design Inspirations



Lake Tahoe, Bus Facility



Kelowna BC, Bus Facility



Milwaukee, WI



Novato, Bus Facility



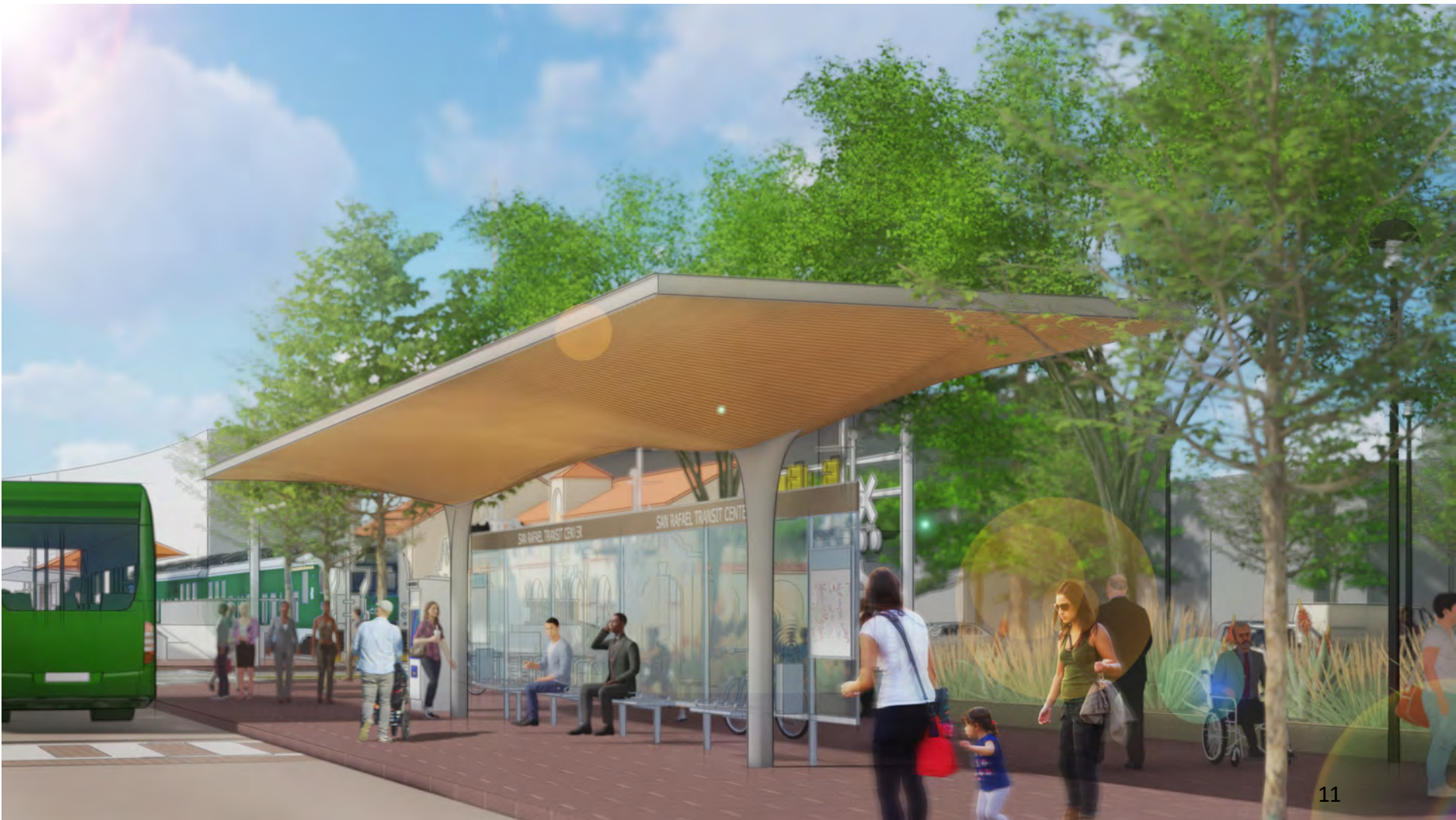


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**NATURAL MATERIALS** such as wood in the canopy





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Provo, UT

## Design Inspirations



Prefabricated Canopy



DART Central Station, TX



Placemaking Elements



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**SIMPLE**, durable, and elegant materials





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Mill Valley



Marin

## Design Inspirations



San Rafael





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## Mixed materials in a “MISSION STYLE”



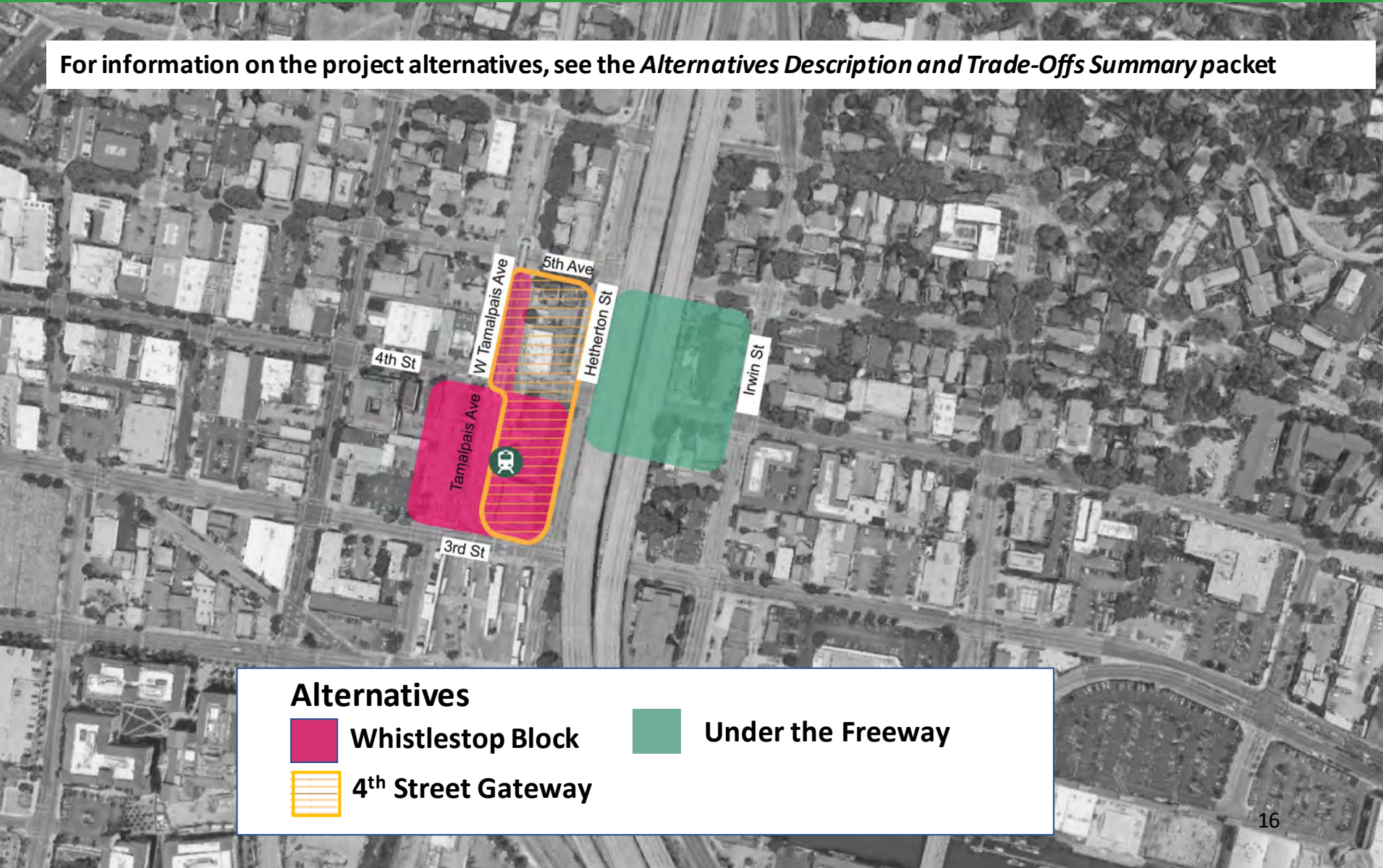


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For information on the project alternatives, see the *Alternatives Description and Trade-Offs Summary* packet



## Alternatives



Whistlestop Block



Under the Freeway



4<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway