



## Group #1 – Phase II Community Questions and Comments

11/21/2014

VTA has received a large number and range of questions or comments from the public regarding Phase II of VTA's BART Silicon Valley Extension. Questions included topics on engineering, planning, land development, timeline, environmental and process. Below is the first set of responses. We anticipate several more groupings of questions to be released in a timely manner.

**Question:** With the Alum Rock Station under the San José Steel site, VTA planned to purchase the entire site and use it for construction staging for the subway. Under the newly-proposed scenarios, will VTA still purchase the San José Steel site for this purpose? If not, then where will subway construction be staged?

**Answer:** VTA will evaluate the project's construction staging needs as part of the update to the state and federal environmental document.

**Question:** Could the expanded maintenance facility in Hayward handle the added maintenance needs of the San José extension as staff is proposing?

**Answer:** VTA continues to work with BART on establishing heavy maintenance needs of the expanded fleet. However, VTA will evaluate the day to day maintenance needs to support operation of service in Santa Clara County. To date, the project includes plans for a daily maintenance facility at Newhall Yard.

**Question:** What is the justification for more than \$540M in "professional services" for SVBX Phase 1 that resulted in tens of millions of dollars in wasted P3 opportunities that could have compensated for the Federal funding and produced a better outcome?

**Answer:** VTA continues to be open about innovative project development methods and during the planning phase of BART Silicon Valley no viable P3 opportunities were identified. However, VTA will continue to entertain P3 possibilities and other avenues of funding for the second phase of the Program.

**Question:** Please outline the steps in this process going forward. In your answer, please include key decision points of VTA Board, decision making process of FTA, the further analysis of alternatives, environmental clearance, scoping process, role of San Jose City Council (when do they weigh in), relationship between BART Board and VTA Board in this process, when is there a final determination.

**Answer:** Further analysis of project alternatives and options will take place during the development of the draft SEIS/SEIR document anticipated to begin in January 2015 with scoping



meetings. For purposes related to the environmental process, the VTA Board of Directors will (1) define a project after public circulation of the draft environmental document to include in the final environmental document, (2) adopt a Recommended Project when they certify the state environmental document. Once a Recommended Project is selected, VTA intends to submit a New Starts Project Development application to FTA for entry into the New Starts funding program.

City Council may agendaize and discuss aspects of the project and comment on environmental documents. However the VTA Board defines and adopts the project. The City of San Jose is represented on the VTA Board of Directors by five councilmembers.

BART is a Cooperative Agency per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), with responsibility to assist VTA by participating in the NEPA process at the earliest possible time; by participating in the scoping process; in developing information and preparing environmental analyses including portions of the environmental impact statement concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise; and in making available staff support at VTA's request to enhance VTA's interdisciplinary capabilities. BART is also a Responsible Agency per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with discretionary approval power over the project.

**Question:** Will this document be CEQA or NEPA or a combination? Will the document be handled as a Sequential or Supplemental EIR or EIS? Please outline the prior EIR/EIS that cover this project and place links on the information website. To what extent will prior analysis be "re-used?" What level of engineering will be used for the EIR/EIS?

**Answer:** The supplemental document that will be prepared will be compliant with both CEQA and NEPA. It will be a combined document: a Supplemental EIS (SEIS) for NEPA and a 3rd Supplemental EIR (SEIR3) for CEQA. All environmental documents prepared for VTA's BART Silicon Valley Program are located on this website:  
<http://www.vta.org/bart/environmentaldocuments>

Although we will be doing supplemental documents for both CEQA and NEPA, many of the sections will be new or substantially revised. Only the information/prior analysis that is still applicable and has not changed will be "re-used." Much of the analysis will be new/updated because the existing conditions have changed, the regulatory setting has changed, and/or the project has changed. The level of engineering/design to be used for this SEIS/SEIR3 is at a conceptual level unless more defined engineering is available.

The scoping process that will begin in January 2015 is designed to finalize the scope of work that is necessary to environmentally clear the project. Additional concerns may be raised during scoping that would need to be added to the analysis of a topical area.



**Question:** At what point will VTA reveal the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street alignment? That is, where will the tunnel portal be located? What will be the approximate alignment of the station box? Will the Alum Rock station box be aerial or underground? Members of the public have expressed concern that a 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Underground Station Box would require significant takes of private property no matter where it is located. For example, they point out Santa Clara Street in the area of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street is not 65 feet wide, suggesting a “cut and cover” box would require taking properties along Santa Clara Street. Diagonal alignments from the former rail ROW to Santa Clara Street would also require property takes for “cut and cover.” How does the selection of a 23<sup>rd</sup> Street station alignment make property takes more likely? Please estimate the number of property takes. How does this affect the overall cost of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Station vs. the 28<sup>th</sup> Street? Has a different construction method been suggested for the station box, ie other than cut and cover?

**Answer:** The presentation made by staff at the October 6, 2014 SVRT Program Working Committee discussed alternatives and options to be evaluated in the environmental process and development of the draft SEIS/SEIR. A station at 23<sup>rd</sup> street was an alternative considered. Due to a number of likely significant impacts and community concerns, the 23<sup>rd</sup> street alternative is no longer being evaluated.

**Question:** The 28<sup>th</sup> Street Station was expected to attract riders from South County and other areas south and east of Interstate 280/680. Where are those riders expected to go? How will their cars be accommodated? To what extent will ridership of the entire system be lowered by the elimination of a station with easy freeway access and parking structure? How will the lowered overall ridership affect the scoring with the FTA program?

**Answer:** The concept for the 28th Street station includes limited parking supply due to neighborhood traffic concerns. The remaining potential demand would mostly be accommodated at the Berryessa Station. Berryessa Station is able to provide sufficient parking. Detailed assessment of parking options and ridership will be part of the environmental analysis.

**Question:** The Coyote Creek and Santa Clara Street bridge have pilings of unknown depth. Earlier analyses looked at southern and northern alignments. The northern alignment was selected. What changes are expected to this decision in light of the suggestion of a 23<sup>rd</sup> Street station?

**Answer:** The 23rd Street Station option is no longer being evaluated. However, the proposed 23rd Street station would not have affected the earlier decision to use the northern alignment.

**Question:** The Diridon Station box is located on a diagonal that makes future development difficult. The flood control structures at the Guadalupe River force a steep descent and climb in the area of the station. What other locations for the station box were considered as part of this analysis? Would a Stockton Avenue station box be feasible? Preferred?



The alignment gradient in the area of the Diridon Station is within allowable BART operating limits. VTA has also evaluated alternative station location options, including a Stockton Avenue station. The station box in the Stockton Avenue area is feasible. However a Stockton Avenue location impacts transit center connectivity between BART and other transit services, making transfers less direct and inefficient.

**Question:** Someone (VTA?) has removed the track from the UPRR bridge across the 101 (south of Mabury) to a point approximately 800 feet south of the 101 freeway, and then added ballast on top of the former track bed in that stretch. This is NOT part of the Phase 1 definition, nor is this included in the EIR documentation for Phase 1 that is published on the VTA website. Who did this and if VTA was involved, how was the work funded?

**Answer:** This area of the Berryessa Extension Project was environmentally cleared for BART tail tracks, however the current design assumes tail tracks will terminate just north of US 101. VTA's BART Silicon Valley Berryessa Extension C700 contractor requested use of VTA's right-of-way from the former UPRR bridge across US 101 to approximately 60' north of Silver Creek. This bridge connects to a construction staging area on the westside of 101 that is being used to temporarily store welded BART rail. This work was completed at the contractor's cost.