

2.1 Project Overview

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District), in coordination with the City of San Rafael (City), Marin County Transit District (Marin Transit), Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), and Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART), plans to replace the transit center in Downtown San Rafael (known as the San Rafael Transit Center, or the C. Paul Bettini Transit Center). The proposed San Rafael Transit Center Replacement Project (proposed project) is needed primarily to replace the existing transit center following the impact on some of the transit center facilities that resulted from the implementation of the SMART Phase 2 line to Larkspur. A new transit center solution in Downtown San Rafael would address near-term and long-term transit needs while improving the desirability and usability of transit for the local community and region.

2.2 Project Background

The San Rafael Transit Center, also known as the C. Paul Bettini Transit Center, is owned by the District, which operates Golden Gate Transit regional and inter-county bus transit services. Figure 2-1 shows the transit center's regional location. The transit center is in Downtown San Rafael, between 2nd Street, 3rd Street, Tamalpais Avenue, and Hetherton Street (see Figure 2-2). With over 800 bus trips daily and 17 operating bus bays, the transit center is the largest regional transit hub in Marin County, providing access to the regional transportation network for area residents and a key transfer point for employees, visitors, and students in San Rafael and the greater North Bay region. The transit center primarily serves bus routes operated by Golden Gate Transit and Marin Transit, but Sonoma County Transit, Sonoma County Airport Express, Greyhound, and paratransit services also use the transit center. On weekdays, there are approximately 9,000 bus boardings and alightings at the transit center. Downtown San Rafael is an important destination, with nearly half of the passengers traveling to or from Downtown and the remaining riders making transfers to other destinations. The 17 bus bays are fully occupied at times during the peak-period pulse. Figure 2-3 shows the layout of the existing transit center.

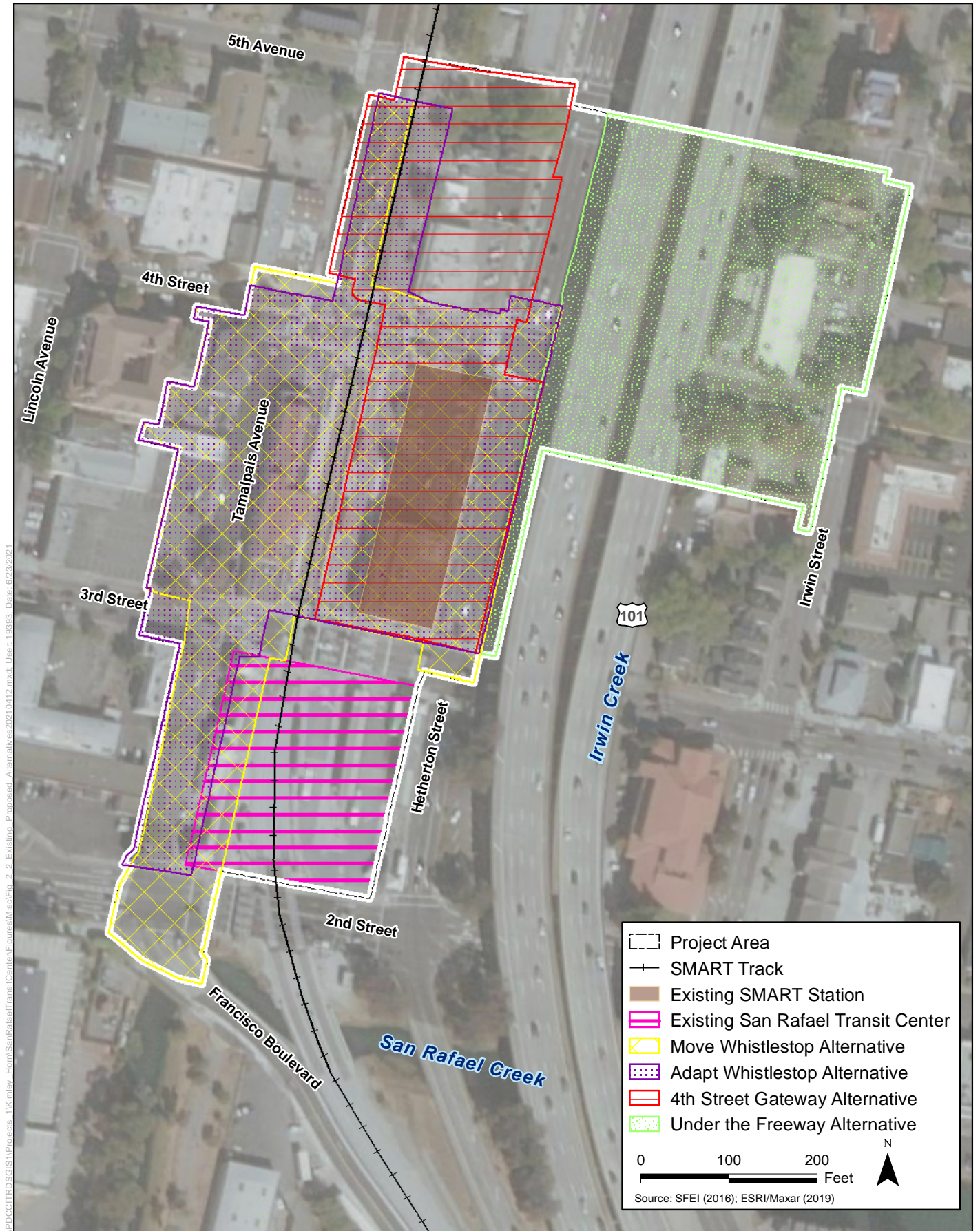
In August 2017, the SMART District commenced passenger rail service on its initial corridor, consisting of 43 miles of rail and 10 stations (Phase 1) in Sonoma and Marin Counties. SMART's Phase 1 corridor parallels U.S. Highway 101 (US-101) beginning at the Sonoma County Airport and terminating in Downtown San Rafael just north of the transit center. SMART riders transferring from the Downtown San Rafael SMART station—located north of 3rd Street—to access the existing transit center south of 3rd Street, as well as riders originating from downtown San Rafael, must navigate a high volume of local and regional vehicular traffic along 3rd Street.



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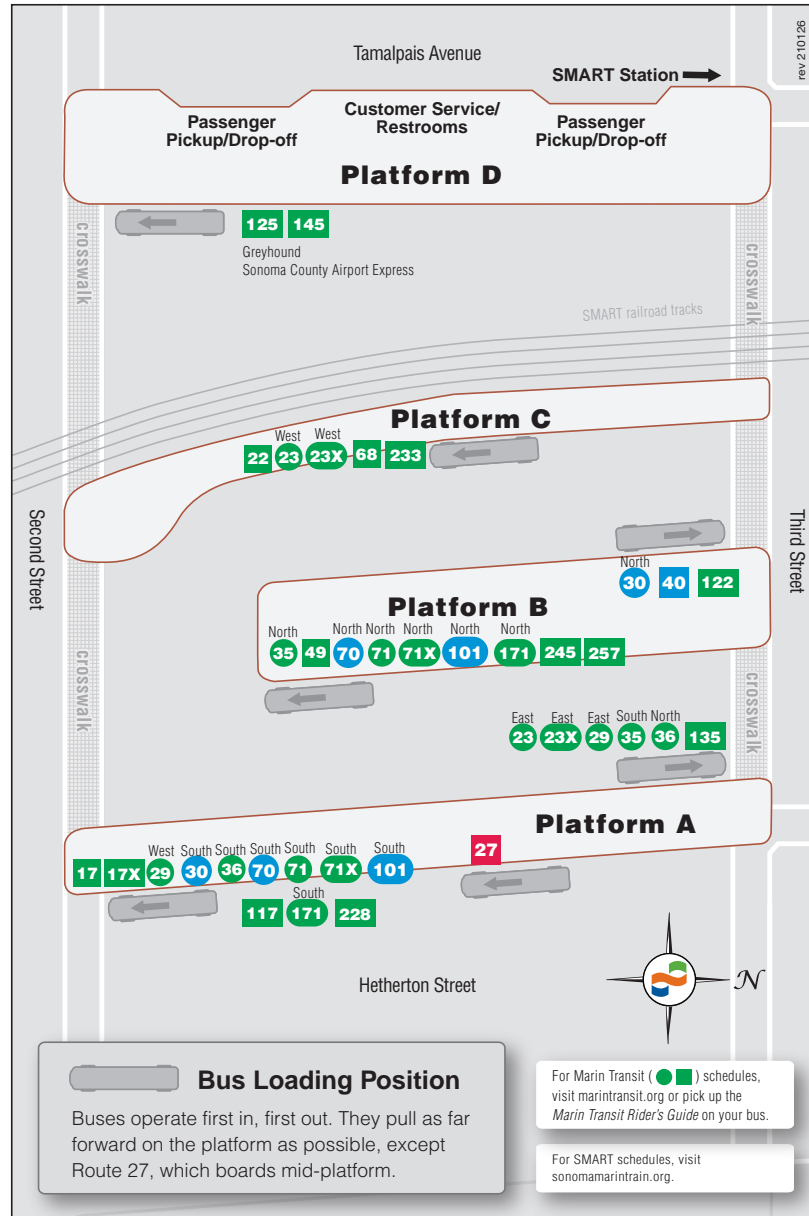
Figure 2-1
Regional Location Map



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Figure 2-2
Existing San Rafael Transit Center and Proposed Alternatives



Source: www.sonomamarintrain.org, 2021

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Figure 2-3
Existing Transit Center Layout

Phase 2 of the SMART project, which completed construction and began service in late 2019, extended passenger rail service from its previous Downtown San Rafael terminus to Larkspur. The southward extension of SMART required the construction of two sets of tracks through the middle of the existing transit center site south of 3rd Street. The SMART Phase 2 line bisected the existing transit center; reconfigured Platforms C and B, negatively affecting bus circulation and bus bay flexibility within and around the transit center; and disrupted pedestrian access and transfer activity among the remaining platforms at the site. This change affected how buses and people access and travel through the transit center and reduced the amount of space available for buses and riders, which was detrimental to bus, vehicle, and pedestrian access and safety. As a result, the transit center must be relocated to another location in Downtown San Rafael.

2.3 Project Objectives

The District, in coordination with the City, Marin Transit, TAM, and SMART, plans to replace the transit center in Downtown San Rafael. The proposed project is needed primarily to replace the existing transit center following the loss of some of the transit center facilities that resulted from the implementation of the SMART Phase 2 line to Larkspur. Specifically, the purpose of the proposed project is to:

- Provide improved transit connectivity and ease of use in and around Downtown San Rafael.
- Enhance local and regional transit use by bringing together multiple modes of the transportation network—including the SMART-bus connection—into a hub that affords transit users the safest, most efficient means of using bus and rail services.
- Efficiently accommodate transit users and services, optimize operating costs, and improve transit desirability.
- Design a functional, attractive, and cost-effective facility that can meet long-term projected service levels and be implemented in an expeditious manner, so as to minimize the period of use of the interim facility.
- Provide a transit facility that is readily accessible to individuals with disabilities, transit users, and transit-dependent populations, including those with low incomes.
- Provide a secure, safe, and inviting space for transit patrons.
- Create a more accessible transit facility for all users by reducing vehicular, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian conflicts and improving safety.
- Provide convenient, pedestrian connections to surrounding land uses.

A new transit center solution in Downtown San Rafael would address near-term and long-term transit needs while improving the desirability and usability of transit for the local community and region. It would also, to the extent feasible, minimize traffic congestion and facilitate efficient transit operations while also promoting pedestrian safety.

2.4 Project Location

The San Rafael Transit Center is in Downtown San Rafael, between 2nd Street, 3rd Street, Tamalpais Avenue, and Hetherton Street (see Figure 2-2). There are four project alternatives being considered for this project: Move Whistlestop Alternative (the preferred alternative), Adapt Whistlestop Alternative, 4th Street Gateway Alternative, and Under the Freeway Alternative. All project alternatives are within Downtown San Rafael. Each alternative is within 500 feet of the existing San Rafael Transit Center and is bordered with a mix of office, residential, and retail uses. See Sections 2.5 and 2.6 below for more details regarding the specific location and boundaries of each alternative. Table 2-1 shows the zoning designation for each parcel where the four build alternatives would be located.

Table 2-1. Land Use and Zoning Designations of the Build Alternative Footprints

Parcel Number	Land Use-Zoning Designation	Address
Move Whistlestop Alternative		
011-279-07	Mixed Use-Public/Quasi-Public	N/A
011-279-01	Mixed Use-Public/Quasi-Public	800 Tamalpais Avenue
014-121-14	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	666 3rd Street
011-277-02	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	680 3rd Street
011-277-01	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	930 Tamalpais Avenue
011-275-13	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	706 3rd Street
011-275-05	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	N/A
011-275-04	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	927 Tamalpais Avenue
011-275-01	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	729 4th Street
011-275-02	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	709 4th Street Unit 200
011-275-03	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	701 4th Street
Adapt Whistlestop Alternative		
014-121-14	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	666 3rd Street
011-277-02	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	680 3rd Street
011-277-01	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	930 Tamalpais Avenue
011-275-13	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	706 3rd Street
011-275-05	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	N/A
011-275-04	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	927 Tamalpais Avenue
011-275-01	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	729 4th Street
011-275-02	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	709 4th Street Unit 200
011-275-03	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	701 4th Street
4th Street Gateway Alternative		
014-121-14	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	666 3rd Street
011-277-02	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	680 3rd Street
014-084-14	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	1006 Tamalpais Avenue
014-084-13	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	637 5th Avenue
014-084-02	Mixed Use-Hetherton Office	633 5th Avenue
Under the Freeway Alternative		
014-122-12	Mixed Use-Commercial/Office District	915 Irwin Street

Parcel Number	Land Use-Zoning Designation	Address
014-122-13	Mixed Use-Commercial/Office District	615 4th Street
014-085-07	Mixed Use-Commercial/Office District	610 4th Street
014-085-09	Mixed Use-Commercial/Office District	1001 Irwin Street
014-085-10	Mixed Use-Residential/Office District	1011 Irwin Street
014-085-11	Mixed Use-Residential/Office District	1015 Irwin Street

2.5 Preferred Alternative: Move Whistlestop

The District has identified the Move Whistlestop Alternative as its preferred alternative.

2.5.1 Existing Uses and Site Characteristics

The site is generally between West Tamalpais Avenue to the west and Hetherton Street to the east, 4th Street to the north, and 3rd Street to the south. Additional improvements are included to shift West Tamalpais Avenue to the east from 2nd Street to 4th Street. This modification would align West Tamalpais Avenue with the block to the north and include construction of a bike path and sidewalk improvements on the west side of West Tamalpais Avenue from 2nd Street to 4th Street. From 2nd to 3rd Street, this improvement would extend into space occupied by the existing transit center. From 3rd Street to 4th Street, this improvement would extend onto the existing west sidewalk along West Tamalpais Avenue. See Figure 2-4 for the site plan. This alternative is on the same block as the existing SMART station. This alternative includes several parcels and is currently occupied by the Whistlestop building, a café, a restaurant, parking spaces, the SMART tracks, and the parcel containing the Citibank building and its affiliated parking lot, also referred to as the “Citibank parcel.” Surrounding the project site are retail, commercial, and office uses to the north, US-101 to the east, the existing San Rafael Transit Center to the south, and restaurants and retail facilities to the west.

2.5.2 Project Characteristics, Circulation, and Pick-up/Drop-off

The Move Whistlestop Alternative would feature five platforms, A through E, and one District building. It would utilize curbside bays on both sides of West Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets. West Tamalpais Avenue between 2nd and 4th Streets would be shifted east to be more proximate to the SMART tracks. The Whistlestop building would be relocated to the west side of West Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets. Alternatively, a new building could be constructed utilizing similar façades or architectural elements from structures currently on the Whistlestop site. This building would include District customer service and operations building space. The District building would be one story and an estimated 3,000 square feet. It would include a driver break room with restrooms, District offices and customer support area with restrooms and a kitchen, and a public lobby with a service counter and restrooms. Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets would be limited to buses only. Bus bays on the Citibank parcel would be accessed via driveways along 3rd and 4th Streets. The area west of West Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets (i.e., space not utilized by the relocated Whistlestop building) would be provided for public plazas, customer service, bicycle parking, and/or transit-supportive land uses. The existing

SMART pick-up/drop-off area on East Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets would be removed and replaced with a pick-up/drop-off area for six vehicles on West Tamalpais Avenue between 4th Street and 5th Avenue. Fifty feet of shuttle parking would be provided on West Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd Street and 4th Street. Maintenance vehicle parking for six District vehicles would be provided on a new access alley constructed at the western edge of the site, connecting between 3rd Street and 4th Street. This would connect to a new driveway on 4th Street between Tamalpais Avenue and Lincoln Avenue to replace the removed driveway on West Tamalpais Avenue to the condo complex at Lincoln Avenue and 4th Street. Construction of the bicycle path on Tamalpais Avenue from 2nd Street to 4th Street, as described in Section 2.5.1, would reflect implementation of one of the City's planned bicycle infrastructure improvements. This bike path would connect to the Mahon Creek Path.

A Traffic Control Plan that addresses circulation for transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and private vehicles will be prepared and implemented for the duration of construction of the proposed project. This plan would follow the guidance contained in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices on temporary closures of vehicle lanes, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks and appropriate detours for these facilities.

2.5.3 Utilities

The Move Whistlestop Alternative would require the removal of existing storm drain infrastructure, relocation of the storm drain infrastructure on West Tamalpais Avenue between 2nd Street and 3rd Street, and installation of new inlets, manholes, and bioretention facilities.

The Move Whistlestop Alternative would include a total of seven bioscope vaults that would be installed at the southern portion of transit center drive aisles to treat runoff from the site prior to discharge into the existing storm drain infrastructure. Additionally, operation of the Move Whistlestop Alternative would include operational stormwater best management practices such as filters and bioscope vaults that remove pollutants combined with onsite retention of stormwater, which reduces the conveyance of any remaining pollutants. Additional post-construction design features would include, but not be limited to:

- All new storm drain inlets and catch basins within the project site shall be marked with prohibitive language and/or graphical icons to discourage illegal dumping.
- Outdoor areas for storage of materials that may contribute pollutants to the stormwater conveyance system shall be covered and protected by secondary containment.
- Permanent trash container areas shall be enclosed to prevent offsite transport of trash, or drainage from open trash container areas shall be directed to the sanitary sewer system.

All applicable design features would be incorporated into project development plans and construction documents and would be operational at the time of project occupancy.

The existing sewer infrastructure between 2nd Street and 3rd Street would also require relocation due to the shift of West Tamalpais Avenue. Utilities, including traffic signal poles, streetlights, overhead power lines, and fire hydrants, would need to be relocated and/or removed.

The Move Whistlestop Alternative would include the installation of solar panels on site. Electrical facility needs at the transit center and platforms include ticketing and fare collection machines and real-time transit information signs, as well as light fixtures and other electrically powered features

at the facility. Additional electrical requirements and infrastructure may be needed for onsite charging of future battery electric buses at the transit center bus bays. However, because the preferred technology for fleetwide rollout of zero-emission buses has not yet been determined, these utility needs should be incorporated in future design phases of the proposed project. Fleetwide rollout of zero-emission buses, along with related infrastructure to support the zero-emission fleet, is a separate planning initiative that is outside the scope of the proposed project. The District would implement the fleetwide rollout in a manner that is consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and any additional energy and utility needs for the fleetwide rollout would be addressed as part of that initiative.

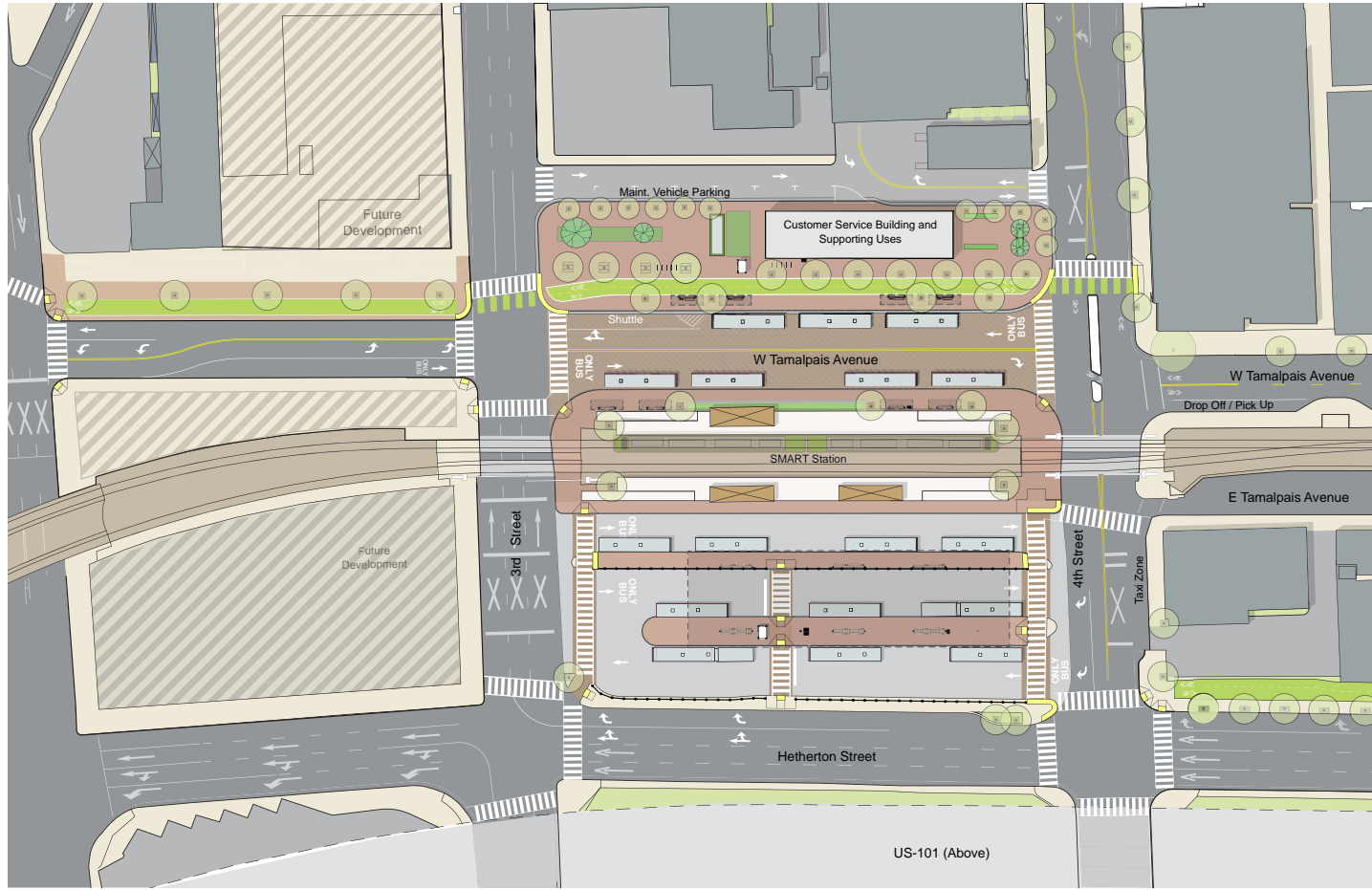
2.5.4 Disposition of Existing Transit Center Site

The District would relocate the existing transit center and dispose of the property where existing facilities are located between 2nd Street, 3rd Street, Tamalpais Avenue, and Hetherton Street. The District does not have any planned use for the existing site/center once the proposed transit center is operational at a new location and there are no plans for the disposition of the site. Therefore, future development of the site is unknown at this time.
















Under the currently adopted *City of San Rafael General Plan 2020*, the existing transit center site is zoned as Public – Quasi-Public (City of San Rafael 2016) and the 2012 *San Rafael Station Area Plan* designates the site as Civic/Non-Taxable, both of which reflect its current use. However, the Draft *San Rafael General Plan 2040*, which is expected to be adopted in 2021, designates the site as “Downtown Mixed Use” (City of San Rafael 2020) in anticipation of the transit center relocation. Any future use or development of the site would conform with City procedures for entitlements, zoning, and land use. The existing transit center was developed using federal funds; therefore, any proceeds from the sale of the property would be allocated to the new transit center. As required by state law, future development of the site would comply with CEQA, the Surplus Lands Act, and other applicable laws. For purposes of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR), it is assumed that the existing site would likely be sold and developed as some form of a mixed-use project, subject to more detailed design and approvals and subsequent CEQA review.

2.5.5 Construction Schedule

The District estimates construction activities would occur over 18 months after the final design is approved. The construction start date is estimated to be 2023 or 2024. The construction period would include mobilization, demolition, utility work, civil and vertical structures work, vertical structures finishing and inspections, and close-out.



Legend

-  Feature Tree
-  Tree with Tree Well
-  Tree
-  Platform Seating
-  Bus Canopy
-  Landscaped Area
-  Bike Racks
-  Secure Bike Parking
-  Security Kiosk
-  Bike Path
-  Canopy Overhead
-  Ped Safety Barrier
-  Ticket Machine
-  Improved Paving
-  Typical Paving



Graphics ... 0748.17 (6/24/21) AB

Source: Kimley-Horn, Via Architecture, 2021.



Figure 2-4
Move Whistlestop Alternative

2.6 Other Build Alternatives

This EIR analyzes three build alternatives to the preferred alternative at an equal level of detail. The build alternatives vary in site area and location as well as specific features:

- Adapt Whistlestop Alternative,
- 4th Street Gateway Alternative, and
- Under the Freeway Alternative

These alternatives, as well as their common components, including disposition of the existing transit center and common improvements, are described in detail below.

2.6.1 Components Common to All Build Alternatives

For all build alternatives, disposition of the existing transit center site and construction schedule would be the same as described in Section 2.5.4 and Section 2.5.5, respectively. Similar to the preferred alternative, the Move Whistlestop Alternative, all build alternatives include the following components:

- Installation of 17 straight-curb bus bays to accommodate transit, airport coach service, and Greyhound services at the transit center
- Provision of paratransit, pick-up/drop-off, maintenance vehicle, and shuttle curb space
- Provision of bicycle parking, including racks and lockers
- Installation of minimum 9-foot-wide platforms adjacent to bus bays
- Installation of passenger amenities including weather protection (such as shelters or canopies) and seating
- Installation of other features including public art, security, and wayfinding signage
- Provision of a roughly 3,000-square-foot building including customer service, public restrooms, driver relief facilities, small retail, maintenance, and security as identified below and shown on Figures 2-5 through 2-7 below

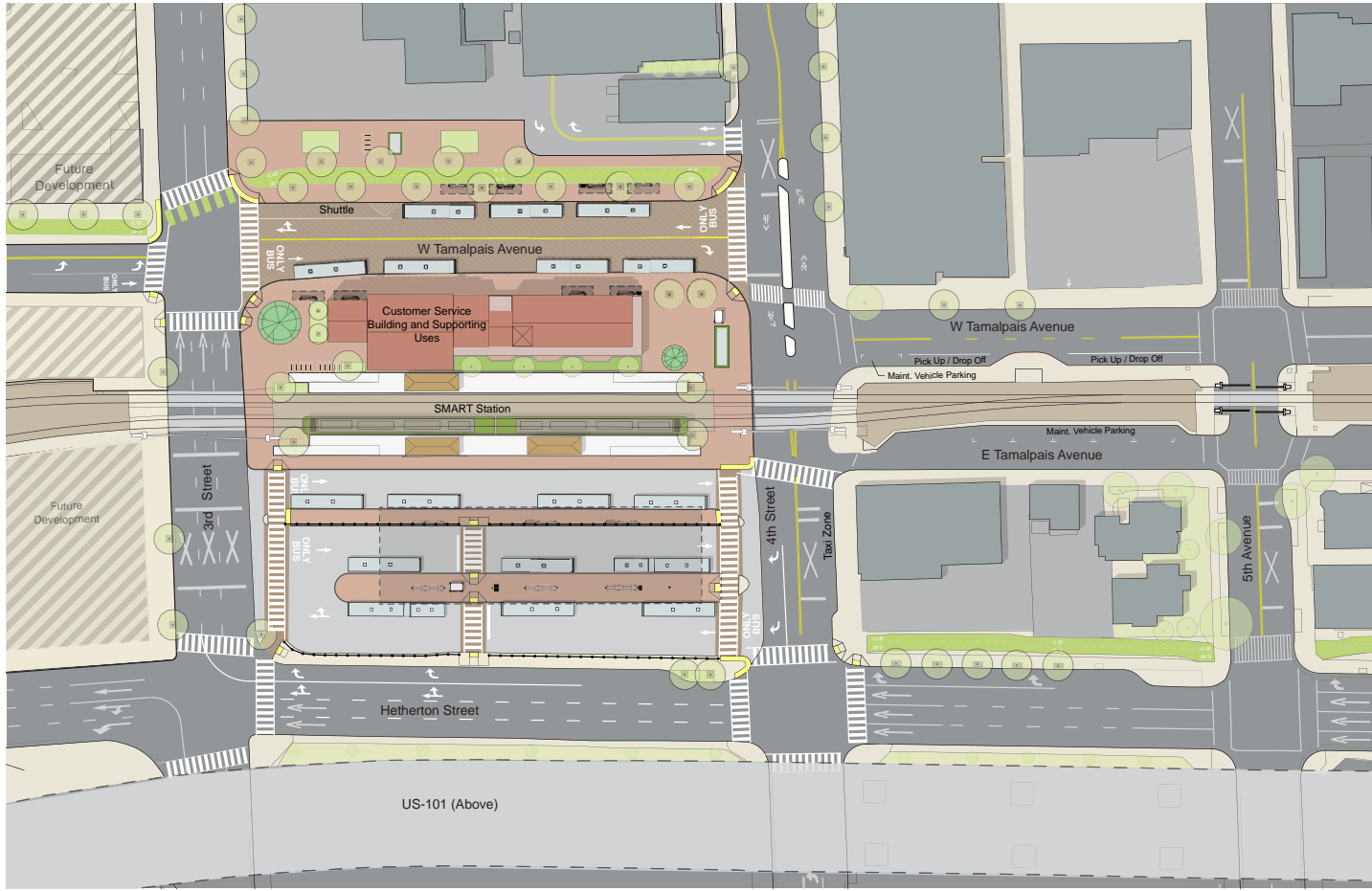
The proposed transit center facilities for all alternatives would require connection to existing sewer, water, and power infrastructure to operate the planned restrooms, kitchenette, and building spaces. The transit center would also provide wireless internet capabilities for District operation facilities and passengers. All alternatives would implement operational stormwater best management practices, as described for the Move Whistlestop Alternative in Section 2.5.3, Utilities, including filters and bioscope vaults that remove pollutants combined with onsite retention of stormwater, which reduces the conveyance of any remaining pollutants. Additional post-construction design features would include, but not be limited to:

- All new storm drain inlets and catch basins within the project site shall be marked with prohibitive language and/or graphical icons to discourage illegal dumping.
- Outdoor areas for storage of materials that may contribute pollutants to the stormwater conveyance system shall be covered and protected by secondary containment.
















- Permanent trash container areas shall be enclosed to prevent offsite transport of trash, or drainage from open trash container areas shall be directed to the sanitary sewer system.

All alternatives would include the installation of solar panels at the project site. Electrical facility needs at the transit center and platforms include ticketing and fare collection machines and real-time transit information signs. Additional electrical requirements and infrastructure may be needed for onsite charging of future battery electric buses at the transit center bus bays. However, because the preferred technology for fleetwide rollout of zero-emission buses has not yet been determined, these utility needs would be incorporated in a future project. Fleetwide rollout of zero-emission buses, along with related infrastructure to support the zero-emission fleet, is a separate planning initiative that is outside the scope of the proposed project. The District would implement the fleetwide rollout in a manner that is consistent with CEQA and any additional energy and utility needs for the fleetwide rollout would be addressed as part of that initiative.

Under all build alternatives, a Traffic Control Plan would address circulation for transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and private vehicles for the duration of construction of the proposed project. This plan would follow the guidance contained in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices on temporary closures of vehicle lanes, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks and appropriate detours for these facilities.



Legend

-  Feature Tree
-  Tree with Tree Well
-  Tree
-  Platform Seating
-  Bus Canopy
-  Landscaped Area
-  Bike Racks
-  Secure Bike Parking
-  Security Kiosk
-  Bike Path
-  Canopy Overhead
-  Ped Safety Barrier
-  Ticket Machine
-  Improved Paving
-  Typical Paving



Graphics ... 0748.17 (6/24/21) AB
















Source: Kimley-Horn, Via Architecture, 2021.



Figure 2-5
Adapt Whistlestop Alternative



Legend

-  Feature Tree
-  Tree with Tree Well
-  Tree
-  Platform Seating
-  Bus Canopy
-  Landscaped Area
-  Bike Racks
-  Secure Bike Parking
-  Security Kiosk
-  Bike Path
-  Canopy Overhead
-  Ped Safety Barrier
-  Ticket Machine
-  Improved Paving
-  Typical Paving



Graphics ... 0748.17 (6/24/21) AB
















Source: Kimley-Horn, Via Architecture, 2021.



Figure 2-6
4th Street Gateway Alternative



Legend

-  Feature Tree
-  Tree with Tree Well
-  Tree
-  Platform Seating
-  Bus Canopy
-  Landscaped Area
-  Bike Racks
-  Secure Bike Parking
-  Security Kiosk
-  Bike Path
-  Canopy Overhead
-  Ped Safety Barrier
-  Ticket Machine
-  Improved Paving
-  Typical Paving



Graphics... 0748.17 (6/24/21) AB

Source: Kimley-Horn, Via Architecture, 2021.



Figure 2-7
Under the Freeway Alternative

2.6.2 Adapt Whistlestop Alternative

2.6.2.1 Existing Site Characteristics

The site is generally between West Tamalpais Avenue to the west, Hetherton Street to the east, 4th Street to the north, and 3rd Street to the south. This alternative would include the construction of a bike path and pedestrian improvements on the west side of West Tamalpais Avenue from 2nd Street to 4th Street. See Figure 2-5 for the site plan. This alternative is on the same block as the existing SMART station. This alternative site crosses nine parcels currently occupied by the Whistlestop building, a café, a restaurant, parking spaces, the SMART tracks, and the Citibank parcel. Uses surrounding the project site include retail, commercial, and office uses to the north, US-101 to the east, the existing San Rafael Transit Center to the south, and restaurants, residential, and retail facilities to the west.

2.6.2.2 Project Characteristics, Circulation, and Pick-up/Drop-off

The Adapt Whistlestop Alternative would feature five platforms, A through E, and one District building. There would be 17 straight-curb bus bays to accommodate transit, airport coach service, and Greyhound services at the transit center. Each bus bay would have a minimum 9-foot-wide platform adjacent and platforms would provide passenger amenities including weather protection (such as shelters or canopies) and seating. Paratransit, pick-up/drop-off, maintenance vehicle, and shuttle curb space would be provided. Other features would include public art, security, provision for bicycle parking including racks and lockers, and wayfinding signage.

The Whistlestop building (minus the Jackson Café) would be renovated or remodeled to serve as District customer service and operations building space. Some of the space within the building could be allocated for non-District uses. Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets would be limited to buses only. Bus bays on the Citibank parcel would be accessed via driveways along 3rd and 4th Streets. The area on the southeast corner of the intersection of Tamalpais Avenue and 4th Street would be provided for bicycle parking. The existing SMART pick-up/drop-off area on East Tamalpais Avenue would be removed and replaced with passenger pick-up/drop-off for six vehicles on West Tamalpais Avenue between 4th Street and 5th Avenue. Fifty feet of shuttle parking would be provided on West Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd Street and 4th Street. Maintenance vehicle parking for six District vehicles would be provided on West and East Tamalpais Avenues between 4th Street and 5th Avenue. A new driveway would be installed on 4th Street between West Tamalpais Avenue and Lincoln Avenue to replace the removed driveway on West Tamalpais Avenue to the condo complex at Lincoln Avenue and 4th Street. Space would be provided for public plazas, customer service, bicycle parking, and/or transit-supportive land uses. Construction of the bicycle path on Tamalpais Avenue from 2nd Street to 4th Street, as described in Section 2.6.2.1, would reflect implementation of one of the City's planned bicycle infrastructure improvements. This bike path would connect to the Mahon Creek Path.

2.6.2.3 Utilities

The Whistlestop building would require connection to existing sewer, water, and power infrastructure to operate the planned restrooms, kitchenette, and building spaces if the existing building does not already do so. The transit center would also provide wireless internet capabilities for District operation facilities and passengers.

The Adapt Whistlestop Alternative would require the removal of existing storm drain infrastructure, relocation of the storm drain infrastructure on West Tamalpais Avenue between 2nd Street and 3rd Street, and installation of new inlets, manholes, and bioretention facilities. Utilities, including traffic signal poles, streetlights, overhead power lines, and fire hydrants, would need to be relocated and/or removed.

The Adapt Whistlestop Alternative would include one bioscape vault, four stormwater filters, and one bioretention area installed at the southern portion of the transit center drive aisles to treat the site's water before it is discharged into the existing storm drain infrastructure.

2.6.3 4th Street Gateway Alternative

2.6.3.1 Existing Uses and Site Characteristics

This alternative site is bounded by 5th Avenue, 3rd Street, Hetherton Street, and the SMART tracks, as well as curb space along West Tamalpais Avenue; see Figure 2-6 for the site plan. North of 4th Street, the existing project site is currently occupied by offices and retail (salons, bagel shop, and a cash checking location) and associated parking spaces. The Citibank building and its affiliated parking lot currently occupy the existing portion of the site south of 4th Street. To the west of the Citibank parcel are the SMART tracks, which align the western portion of the project site. Adjacent to the tracks are the Whistlestop building and Jackson Café. Surrounding the project site are retail and office uses to the north, US-101 to the east, the existing San Rafael Transit Center to the south, and restaurants and retail facilities to the west.

2.6.3.2 Project Characteristics, Circulation, and Pick-up/Drop-off

The 4th Street Gateway Alternative would feature six platforms, A through F, and two District buildings. There would be three on-street bays located curbside on the west side of Hetherton Street between 4th Street and 5th Avenue. In order to accommodate these curbside bays, southbound right turns from Hetherton Street to 4th Street would be precluded. Along Hetherton Street, space would be provided for public plazas, customer service, bicycle parking, and/or transit-supportive land uses. Bus bays would be accessed via driveways on 3rd Street, 4th Street, and Hetherton Street, and directly on Hetherton Street. Passenger pick-up/drop-off for six vehicles would be provided on West Tamalpais Avenue between 4th Street and 5th Avenue. Maintenance vehicle parking for six District vehicles would be provided on West Tamalpais Avenue between 4th Street and 5th Avenue and within the northern portion of the transit facility. In order to accommodate this alternative, the existing Mahon Creek bicycle and pedestrian path between 4th Street and 5th Avenue would be realigned around the site on 5th Avenue and West Tamalpais Avenue. The existing Victorian homes south of 5th Avenue would either be removed or relocated, and the existing SMART pick-up/drop-off area on East Tamalpais Avenue would be removed. Fifty feet of shuttle parking would be provided on West Tamalpais Avenue between 4th Street and 5th Avenue. The District buildings would be one story and an estimated 3,000 square feet in total. The main building would include a driver break room with restrooms, District offices and customer support area with restrooms and a kitchen, and a public lobby with a service counter and restrooms. The second building would include retail space and a security kiosk.

2.6.3.3 Utilities

The 4th Street Gateway Alternative would require the removal of existing storm drain infrastructure and the installation of new inlets, manholes, and bioretention facilities. Utilities, including traffic signal poles, streetlights, and fire hydrants, would need to be relocated and/or removed.

The 4th Street Gateway Alternative would include two bioscape vaults, four stormwater filters, and one bioretention area installed at the southern portion of the transit center drive aisles to treat the site's water before it is discharged into the existing storm drain infrastructure.

2.6.4 Under the Freeway Alternative

2.6.4.1 Existing Uses and Site Characteristics

This alternative site is generally located beneath US-101 and bounded by 5th Avenue, south of 4th Street, Irwin Street, and Hetherton Street; see Figure 2-7 for the site plan. Underneath US-101 within the site boundary there is a park-and-ride lot, maintained and operated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Irwin Creek, underneath US-101, flows parallel to US-101. North of 4th Street the existing project site is currently occupied by offices, a Caltrans park-and-ride lot, a bike shop, parking, and vacant storefronts and south of 4th Street the site is currently occupied by retail, offices, and a Caltrans park-and-ride lot. Surrounding the project site are residences and offices to the north; retail and residences to the east; retail and offices to the south; and retail uses, restaurants, and residences and offices to the west.

2.6.4.2 Project Characteristics, Circulation, and Pick-up/Drop-off

The Under the Freeway Alternative would feature six platforms, A through F. The affiliated bus bays would be accessed via driveways on 4th Street, Irwin Street, and Hetherton Street. Internal circulation would be provided for the northern block to allow buses accessing bays from either side of the site to egress on either side as well, which is critical given the diverse bus routing accessing the site. Space would be provided for public plazas, customer service, and/or transit-supportive land uses. This would require three bridges/viaducts over Irwin Creek to connect Hetherton Street to the bus bays. Two bridges would be located on the block north of 4th Street and one would be located on the block south of 4th Street. There would be some bus berths on the bridges, and spaces within the existing Caltrans park-and-ride lots would be displaced. A total of 72 displaced parking spaces would be replaced at a 1 to 1 ratio, with the location of the replaced spaces to be determined during final design. These parking spaces ideally would be in close proximity to the current parking location. However, if no feasible space in Downtown San Rafael is identified, then the spaces could be replaced in an alternate location near the US 101 corridor. These spaces are not expected to require any ground disturbance or affect sensitive habitats. Pick-up and drop-off space for three vehicles and 50 feet of curb space for taxis would be provided on 5th Avenue between Irwin Street and Hetherton Street. Maintenance vehicle parking for six District vehicles would be provided on the internal roadway with bus bays south of 4th Street with access from Irwin Street, and on 5th Avenue between Irwin Street and Hetherton Street. Fifty feet of shuttle parking would be provided on 4th Street between Irwin Street and Hetherton Street. The District building would be one story and an estimated 3,000 square feet. It would include a driver break room with restrooms, District offices and customer support area with restrooms and a kitchen, and a public lobby with a service counter and restrooms. Other ancillary project components, such as maintenance sheds, may be included on site within the identified project footprint.

2.6.4.3 Utilities

The Under the Freeway Alternative would require the removal of existing storm drain infrastructure, relocation of the storm drain infrastructure on Irwin Street between 4th Street and 5th Avenue, and installation of new inlets, manholes, and bioretention facilities. Utilities, including traffic signal poles, streetlights, overhead power lines, and fire hydrants, would need to be relocated and/or removed.

The Under the Freeway Alternative would include one bioretention area installed in the centermost drive aisle of the northern portion of the transit facility to treat the site's water before it is discharged into the existing storm drain infrastructure.

2.7 No-Project Alternative

The State CEQA Guidelines require a lead agency to evaluate a No-Project Alternative in an EIR to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)). Under the No-Project Alternative, an agency must consider what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the proposed project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.

Under the No-Project Alternative, the District would not relocate the transit center; it would remain at its current location in Downtown San Rafael between 2nd Street, 3rd Street, Tamalpais Avenue, and Hetherton Street and continue to operate as it does currently.

The southward extension of SMART to Larkspur in late 2019 required the construction of two sets of tracks through the middle of the existing transit center site south of 3rd Street. The SMART tracks bisect the existing transit center, which required reconfiguration of platforms. These changes have led to reduced site functionality and capacity including eliminating existing bus and taxi staging platforms, as well as some bicycle facilities; inhibiting some bus turning movements; increasing bus congestion within the transit center; increasing queuing on surrounding surface streets during train crossing events; and channelizing pedestrian circulation within the transit center area. Pedestrian access and transfer activity among the remaining platforms at the transit center has also been disrupted. The existing transit center is deficient in bus operations, connectivity between modes, and pedestrian safety. The 17 existing bus bays are fully utilized at peak times and would not allow for any additional growth in bus volumes. Additionally, there is no land available for provision of paratransit, additional pick-up/drop-off, maintenance vehicle, and shuttle curb space.

Under the No-Project Alternative, the District would not be able to meet the project objectives to maintain or enhance the bus service and transfer capabilities of the existing site while maintaining accessibility and providing a positive passenger experience. Additionally, the No-Project Alternative would not meet the transportation goals established in the *San Rafael Transit Center Relocation Study* (City of San Rafael et al. 2017), the *San Rafael Downtown Station Area Plan* (City of San Rafael 2012), the long-range *Strategic Vision Plan* (TAM 2017), or *Plan Bay Area 2040* (MTC and ABAG 2017).

2.8 Approvals and Permits Required for the Preferred Project and Alternatives

The proposed project would require approvals and permits from several authorities, including those listed in Table 2-2. The project proponent may also obtain a grading permit and building permit from the City of San Rafael and site and design review and approval from the City's Planning & Transportation Commission, Architectural Review Board, and City Council.

Table 2-2. Required Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit/Review Required
State Water Resources Control Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 401 Certification (Under the Freeway Alternative only)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 404 Permit (Under the Freeway Alternative only)
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction General Stormwater Permit
California Department of Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encroachment Permit (Under the Freeway Alternative only)