

Sacramento Valley Station Master Plan
Stakeholder Focus Group Meeting – Land Use / Placemaking
Wednesday, January 10, 2018 | 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Stanford Gallery, 111 I Street, Sacramento

Meeting Summary

On Wednesday, January 10, 2018 the City of Sacramento held the final set of stakeholder focus group meetings for Phase I of the Sacramento Valley Station Master Plan. The stakeholder meeting series included meetings regarding land use / placemaking and mobility interests. The land use / placemaking meeting took place from 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. at the Stanford Gallery, located at 111 I Street in Sacramento.

Project team members that attended the land use / placemaking stakeholder focus group meeting are as follows:

Greg Taylor, City of Sacramento
Geeti Silwal, Perkins + Will
Luca Giaramidaro, Perkins + Will
Gladys Cornell, AIM Consulting
Nicole Porter, AIM Consulting
Taylor Coover, AIM Consulting

Seventeen representatives attended the final land use / placemaking stakeholder focus group meeting for the Sacramento Valley Station Master Plan. Representatives from the following organizations that attended the meeting included:

Alkali and Mansion Flats Historic Neighborhood Association
California State Parks
Downtown Railyard Ventures
Downtown Sacramento Partnership
EPMI
JMA Ventures
Northwind Commerical, Inc.
Old Sacramento Business Association
Separovich / Domich Real Estate Development
The River District
UC Davis Facilities Development & Planning Department
Vista Investments, LLC

Project Overview

As downtown Sacramento becomes more densely populated and the Railyards begins to develop, the Sacramento Valley Station area will become a central destination for both community members and transit riders across the region. More information about this is available in the [Northern California Megaregion Report](#).

The goal of the initial phase of the Sacramento Valley Station Master Plan is to develop two conceptual alternatives for a future expanded regional transportation hub, which includes 38 acres of property surrounding the station. The master plan will integrate transit-oriented development and catalyze a sustainable downtown Sacramento. The completed plan will lead to the development of a transit center of infill and compact development, revitalized urban and community centers and reduced automobile usage and fuel consumption, and ultimately reduced greenhouse gas emissions.



The 38-acre Sacramento Valley Station Master Plan site consists of:

- The existing passenger rail station on City Property of approximately 17-acres
- The mainline track corridor of approximately 17-acres
- Adjacent undeveloped land
- A 1-acre privately-owned Railway Express Agency parcel at the eastern side of the station between H and I Street
- A 2-acre privately-owned Sacramento Railyards Lot 40 situated between the SVS and 5th Street north of H Street

Master Plan Guiding Principles

The project team established three principles for a successful station area:

- *Placemaking* – create a vibrant destination; catalyze new development; create an iconic landmark and a welcoming gateway to the City
- *Mobility* – ensure a diverse mix of programming; preserve the culture and build a distinct identity
- *User Experience* – provide ease of connectivity in, out and through the station; create an efficient multimodal hub; ensure parking is minimized and managed

These three principles guided the project team as they analyzed key findings from site analysis, gathered input from key stakeholders and the community, and developed two conceptual alternatives for the station.

Stakeholder Engagement Process

The Sacramento Valley Station Master Plan’s public outreach program included facilitated discussions throughout the planning process with key stakeholders representing mobility and placemaking interests. Land use / placemaking interests include business interests, community-based organizations, cultural amenities, infill developers, and neighborhood associations, property and business improvement districts (PBIDs), and properties within a ¼-mile radius of the planning site. Mobility interests include public transportation agencies, transit providers, active transportation organizations, and transportation advocacy groups.



The City held the first set of stakeholder focus group meetings in March 2017. Two meetings were held during this time; one with land use / placemaking interests, and one with mobility interests. In June 2017, the City held an all-hands third focus group meeting with both areas of interests. The final set of focus group meetings, held in January 2018, included two meetings; one with land use / placemaking interests and one with mobility interests.

Stakeholder Focus Group Format

The beginning of the meeting was held in an open house format, where stakeholder representatives were provided with an opportunity to review display boards highlighting the two design concepts as well as the proposed transit network and street hierarchy, open space network, station layout, and site programming.

The project team then gave a brief presentation to provide stakeholder representatives with an overview of the two conceptual alternatives developed for the master plan. Following the presentation, stakeholders discussed key elements of the conceptual alternatives and project phasing.

The meeting objectives included:

- Review the project objectives and City’s vision for the master plan.
- Provide an overview of and gather input on key elements of the two conceptual alternatives.
- Identify stakeholders’ goals, current projects, and upcoming projects; the timeline of these goals and projects; and how they may impact the success of phasing the Sacramento Valley Station Master Plan.
- Discuss stakeholder expectations of the future SVS master planning site.

Stakeholder Discussion

The following is a discussion summary from the meeting. Discussion questions and comments have been categorized by topic.

Transit/Transportation

- It is critical that this project plans for Greyhound.
- UC Davis' current struggle is transportation, especially getting people across the causeway to our campus. We have a bus that runs every hour and shuttles students between the Davis and Sacramento locations.
- How can transit such as the Capitol Corridor improve over the next years to help transportation for students and employees of UC Davis travel across the causeway and help support growth?
- Could the City convert the historic station into a depot for buses?
 - *Project team response:* Thank you for your suggestion. At this time, the City will be considering many different opportunities for developing the historic station into a destination. Bus facilities will be part of the new concourse.
- Once you reach the Bay Area, it is easy to connect to BART and other transit services. However, when you come back to Sacramento, you have to plan your trip perfectly and time it perfectly, if you want to use transit. There is little flexibility.
- Removing the Interstate 5 ramps makes sense. I hope the City can make that happen.
- Improvements to 4th Street will help create an additional entrance to the Central City from the station.
- There is a severe lack of housing in area. The City should think about adding affordable housing units to this site. Most of the buildings I manage in the area have 100% occupancy.
- This project is not an island in and of itself. The Railyards has 6,000 – 10,000 projected housing units and the River District has 2,500. The City doesn't need to look at the Sacramento Valley Station Master Plan project to provide housing needs for the entire City. The City needs to look at this project to provide a transportation hub.



Connections to other Destinations

- Connections to 4th Street, the Downtown Commons, and the Riverfront are key elements to this project's success.
- In both options, it seems there is a way to connect from the station to the Railyards, but no way to connect to Downtown. But the station is right there in the central business district. If I am looking at this station as a new center of Downtown Sacramento, I need to know how it will connect to the Central City, especially to the Downtown Commons.
- Concentrate on connections to Downtown and to the river. Focus on this now, because if you look at Los Angeles, it is too late for them to plan for that.

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- If UC Davis' student housing component is strong enough, or if the rail connection from Sacramento to Davis is strong enough, it could be viable for UC Davis students to live in Sacramento's urban core and commute to the Davis campus by rail.
- Provide easy and accessible connections to amenities such as Old Sacramento and the Downtown Commons.
- The station should provide connections to the Downtown Commons and to 4th Street.
- Any nearby hubs, such as the River District, need to be connected. The River District has been isolated for a long time. We need Sacramento to consider the River District as something other than an old commercial area. Look at this as another step in helping transform the Central City neighborhood.
- The City needs to anticipate connections to other destinations more than one mile away. If this is going to be a major transportation hub, you cannot only consider a ½-mile radius.

Connectivity within the Site

- There need to be well established and easy to follow connections for people coming in and out of the station.
- The current configuration of the Sacramento Valley Station requires transit riders to take a very long walk to get to the train tracks. That long walk is losing current and potential riders. I think it is a great idea to strengthen the public plaza, but if you make it difficult for people to get from there to their train, the purpose of the station is lost.
 - *Project team response:* Thank you for your suggestion. The City and project team have studied other transit hubs around the world and many have longer walks from their public spaces to their concourse; the difference is those walks are comfortable and enjoyable. The City is looking to create an enjoyable experience for transit riders as they walk from the public plaza to their next mode of transportation.
- The long walk from the depot to the train tracks is losing current and potential transit riders. People are stressed running to their train and running from the train to catch light rail and buses.



Development near the site

- The 800 Block is a great residential development site anticipated off of K Street.
- Development on I Street and H Street would help open up the area around the station.
- Currently the station has a shuttle that takes people to the train tracks if they are not able to access them on their own. I hope there will be services similar to this when the new site is built.
- Will streetcar come down H Street?
 - *Project team response:* Yes, the plan is based on the current configuration of the streetcar line.

- What is the timeline for streetcar?
 - *Project team response:* Construction on the streetcar is anticipated to begin in Spring 2019.
- UC Davis is building a new tower at the Sacramento campus, which could bring 2,000 square feet to the location.
- UC Davis is working with Mayor Steinberg on the vision for “Aggie Square.” This could bring more jobs and visitors to the area.
- I am most excited about removing the Interstate 5 ramps. I believe this will encourage investment and development in the area.

Density

- The higher density the City can reach in a site like this, with every form of transportation available in one spot, the better. That makes a lot of sense. The economics of higher density units will be challenging, especially if you want to pencil out affordable housing units. The City may want to consider mixed-income. To make a high-rise building pencil out, you need at least some market rate units in there.
- Putting dense development around the transit station makes sense. More density around Sacramento’s central core is where the City is and should be headed.

Office Buildings

“What is needed, in terms of phasing, for the site to be a viable resource that encourages development of an office campus?”

- Opening up connections and visibility to the riverfront will be the key to catalyzing office development at the site. A riverfront connection will change the complexity of what is currently taking place in the area: concrete.
- The reaction most people working downtown have to their office is that work in “concrete canyons.” Developers can be basic; the City needs to find a way to accommodate the site for developers to build and expand office spaces.
- In general, office development has slowed.
- The profile of what was being built 20 years ago has changed dramatically. The office campus development at the Railyards has a bigger picture than just office buildings.
- I think opening the west end of the site to more green space and the river will be the key. Once people see they can take a breath from their work with a walk from their office to the river and to green spaces, the development will follow.
- Creating the palette of the area is important. The City needs to have the infrastructure in place and create paths from the site to the riverfront so that when the time comes and the market changes, we are ready.
- You can’t spur development; you can only get the infrastructure in place and get the site ready for development.
- I think the Kaiser Permanente campus at the Railyards will help a lot.

- Nobody wants to rent a big office tower; businesses are looking for more creative office spaces now.
- The City needs to be careful when it considers designs for office and housing spaces at this site, especially near Interstate 5 and Old Sacramento. Please consider the safety component of each space. The spaces should be well lit and safe. Sacramento could follow the 24-hour city model by the time this project is built and finished, so that could help.

Riverfront Connections

- It is critical that green space connects the station to the riverfront.
- The Downtown Commons provides a destination downtown beyond just the convention center.
- Timing on riverfront redevelopment is entirely reliant on generating funding for it. The City is looking to create a larger partnership to generate this funding, but the timeline is similar to the master plan's timeline.

Drop-off and Pick-up at the Site

- Is the City planning on having an exclusive drop-off area for rideshare vehicles?
 - *Project team response:* Yes, there will be lanes in the drop-off area.
- Has the City considered if and how autonomous vehicles will affect the station configuration? Especially in relation to the drop-off and pick-up areas?
 - *Project team response:* Yes.
- The University of California, Los Angeles started a program that provided free Lyft and Uber rides for students on campus. They had more than 19,000 trips logged through this program. I think the next generation will be more dependent on ridesharing services.
- It will be critical to have a place at the station for people to be dropped off and picked up. Today, it gets chaotic in the parking lot, especially when the trains are running late.
- Focusing the drop-off points behind the historic depot makes more sense.

Parking

- Could the City put temporary parking in the parcels that are not being developed until later in the future? Temporary parking could help mitigate the parking issue we have at the station today, and then when the site is ready to develop the City could take the parking out.
- How many more people is the City projecting will move to and live in this area? How will that impact everyone in the area, specifically in regards to parking?
 - *Project team response:* Considering anticipated new development in and around the master planning site, the City and project team's studies of the ½-mile radius around the site project there will be about 1,150 residential units in the area.
- My concern is parking. We own residential units, and the lack of parking in the area turns away potential tenants. They see no parking is available and they decide to live somewhere else.
 - *Project team response:* The City will follow the Downtown parking guidelines, but we do not anticipate adding additional parking for transit riders at the station at this time.

There will be parking added for the private development components in the planning area, but not specifically for transit riders.

- What will happen to the parking lot by the historic depot?
 - *Project team response:* Eventually the City would like to reach a point where no parking is needed by the depot. The parking lot that is currently there would be replaced with a civic plaza.
- Parking at the station is an important component for transit riders and visitors today. If you make it more convenient for them to be dropped off and picked up, then you should see the need for parking decrease.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections

- Is the intention to have bicycle and pedestrian connections running east and west through or around the station? If so, the City should consider access and security. The connection on F Street to Old Sacramento is great on paper, but will it be safe? Currently that area is not safe for bicyclists or pedestrians.
- If the City is looking at a bike route that overlaps with the bus terminal, please consider that there may be a lot of backups with all the bus activity.
- Maybe the City could look at having elevated bicycle access around the more heavily trafficked areas.
- The station configuration needs to make walking and biking more convenient than driving. Focus the experience around the visitor and transit rider, then you will see an increase in potential riders. I think the potential at this site is massive.

Street Network

- Will H Street become a two-way street?
 - *Project team response:* Yes.

Phasing

- Development at the station should be phased so people getting off the train have something to do or somewhere to go. Having spaces for people to engage is important, especially in terms of safety.
- As far as phasing is concerned, housing should be considered in the initial phases. Housing will drive the development of amenities for residents, which can serve transit riders from San Francisco and in Sacramento.

Option 1

- I prefer Option 1.
- Some people like Option 1 the way it is, but you could achieve a higher number of residential units if you built two towers instead of just one.
- The multimodal elements in Option 1 are more accommodating. The transportation elements speak to me more. I think the goal of this project should be focused on that.

Option 2

- Option 2 buries the concourse.
- Option 2 provides more space for development.

Additional Comments

- What is happening to the Interstate 5 onramps?
 - Project team response: The City is beginning a study this year to determine if we can reconfigure or relocate the Interstate 5 ramps by the station. The study will help determine if it is feasible to eliminate the I-5 onramps to provide enhanced access to the Sacramento Valley Station site and other adjacent destinations.
- If you remove the Interstate 5 ramps, you will have a huge canvas on the back of the Railroad museum that could be used for a series of murals or other programming that activates the space.
- From the State Parks' perspective, we would look to this station to bring in more people and help tourism.
- The City should consider being more programmatic around development near the Railroad museum. Focus less on development in that area and more about activating the space.
- The City should consider that technical analysis and traffic studies may drive the station layout towards Option 1 or Option 1.
- The City has an opportunity to create a great visual icon at the station.
- Don't make the vision so monumental that this site never gets built.
- Either option is far superior to what we have today.

Board Display Feedback

The following is a summary of input gathered through post-it notes attached to board displays around the meeting room.

- Think bigger!
- River Park opens up opportunity and attractive amenities for office buildings and campuses.
- There needs to be a close transit office that works well.
- The station needs to be welcoming, well-lit and safe for 24 hours a day!
- Future investments need to happen to see changes in the next 5-10 years.
- We need more market-rate housing, and senior housing in initial phases.
- Creative office space.
- More density in the central core.
- More affordable housing for students.
- Realistic parking consideration.