Santa Clara Community Working Group (CWG) Meeting Summary

Date of Meeting: September 14, 2026 (4-6 p.m.)

Location: VTA's BSVII Project Office – Component Conference Room, Zoom

Attendees:

Members in Attendance: Alden Smith, Ana Vargas-Smith, Erofile Dionisopoulos, Jack Morash, John Urban, Jonathon Evans, Rob Mayer, Sean Collins, Sheldon Ah Sing, Todd Trekell

Members not in Attendance: Jeanette Coran, Ron Miller, Ryan Morfin, Michael Liw, Scott Smith

Speaker Attendees: Frank Ponciano (VTA Facilitator), Erica Roecks (VTA), Omar Adel (VTA), Greg Thiebault (VTA), Ian Williams (VTA), Brian Curran (VTA)

Meeting Agenda:

- Welcome & Report Outs
- West Portal Construction Update
- Phase II Program Update
- Station Plaza Design Update
- Planning for Construction
    - Instrumentation & Monitoring (I&M) Overview
- Next Steps & Discussion

Follow-Up Items:

- VTA will send CWG members an invitation with the date and time for the West Portal Construction Tour.
- VTA will provide a larger station area map to show all bike parking at the Station.

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
Welcome & Report Outs	No comments.
West Portal Construction Update	
Is that a plan view or a side view?	It is a view from the side; it is a cross-section view.
Will there be a tour?	Yes, we are working towards finding a date and time that works for everyone.
Why does the caterpillar shaft have three sections for the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM)?	The Tri-cell arrangement of the caterpillar shaft provides the structural efficiency required for a large gallery-style shaft to host the TBM assembly and launch. Furthermore, the design is dictated by tight settlement tolerances from the adjacent rail roads.
I am so inspired by what I saw – super exciting – sign me up for a tour! It is so immense. Seeing the drone flyover is so impressive.	Comment noted.
Kudos for the safety record.	Comment noted.
Phase II Program Update	
Are those all federal funds?	No, that is all state funds. That does not include our state tax measure.
Guesstimated time of muck removal? 2 years?	The removal is needed for the entirety of the tunnel construction, which is between three to three and a half years.
With all these trucks coming and going, will 75% come out of Newhall Drive? Would the other 25% come out of Brokaw Road? What are the access points?	We are not quite there yet for the task force, but we are now kicking off and will loop you all into that.

Station Plaza Design Update: Radial Layout	
What is your vision in that area? Do bicyclists have the right of way? What about undereducated bicyclists?	Pedestrians would be proposed to have a right of way in walking areas, and bicyclists will be directed to dedicated bike lane, pedestrians are not directed to bike lanes. Signage will be established within the area to delineate, as well as pavement markings.
I always run late so I always go through the shortest route. Could I zip through and go off the stairs on my bike, or do I stay on the green if I am coming from the tunnel to the lockers? I do not see signage in the graphics. Safety-wise, it is probably best to separate them.	While the VTA and designers cannot dictate where vandals may trample landscaping, the routing to the station from the parking lot will be clearly delineated. There will be signs encouraging people to stay on the green Class IV bike lane.
I love the trees and how you described them as orchard like. Did we decide what the trees would be?	The small tree is a Trident Maple. They are seasonal. The large tree is a Valley Oak.
I think it looks nice. I do share some concerns on how the pedestrian and bike traffic would interface each other. If you go to the train station now, the bikes are going fast with no regard for pedestrians.	Comment noted.
I think this is great. Valley Oaks are beautiful but messy – acorns and leaves drop, and it is a nightmare for maintenance.	Comment noted.
I was wondering if bike parking was considered on both sides of the corners to spread out the intensity across the pedestrian mixing zone. On the Guadalupe River Trail, there are signs	There is more bike parking off-screen, including racks and lockers beyond the west side of the station entry.

saying that pedestrians should yield to bicyclists.	
Could you show us where the bike lockers are?	They are the dark gray rectangles on Brokaw Road.
The widest pathway entrance goes from where it says 'Station Plaza' toward the southeast. Is that just a visual look to give a grand view into the station, or is that going to be an indication of where most people will be coming to and from?	Both. It will funnel people in. The bus transit center on the west side of the rail corridor will remain, so bus riders will come through the pedestrian underpass. The wide entrance will open the view and accommodate people coming from both sides.
Station Plaza Layout: Recessed Layout	
Like before when we had this discussion, I like the location of the signature tree here. Nice seating area.	Comment noted.
I do like the relocation of the signature tree. Perhaps if it is closer to the smaller trees, it will be less noticeable how messy it is.	Comment noted.
I like the signature tree in those locations. In terms of the orchard trees and the medallions, the signature tree is supposed to predate the orchards, but it seems to be on grid. The thing I am struggling with is the two lower trees that are not necessarily aligned with the plaza; they seem to get lost in the lower right. It would be interesting to see if that was thought through even more. In terms of the bike plan, was there a study done on where the majority of bikes come from?	Comment noted.

The plaza – especially the large mixing zone – seems like a wasteland. It is not intimate. It seems lost and open.	
Station Plaza Layout: Rectilinear Layout	
I like that it has a sense of place more than the other ones. Was there ever consideration to terminate the bike path?	Comment noted.
I think this is more functional. Option 2 [Recessed Layout] was more aesthetically pleasing, but this one is a better use of space. I am intrigued by this one.	Comment noted.
What Plaza Layout do you prefer?	
Is there enough distance between the Station Infrastructure Facility Building and the bike lockers? We need to have landscaping. We want to make sure there is drought-tolerant stuff because when budgets get cut, that is the first thing to go. I have not seen many BART stations with greenery.	Comment noted.
There are some things I like about the third option, the Rectilinear Layout. You have done a good job of separating bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and I appreciate that you made the walkway a little more robust and clear. However, I feel like something has been lost in the design; it is almost too square. I like the organic feeling of the Recessed and Radial Layouts. Is it possible to blend elements of the Rectilinear Layout with the Recessed Layout to keep some of that organic feeling?	Comment noted.

For example, on the left of the Rectilinear Layout, you have an extra bike/pedestrian crossing that is not on the other two. That could be practical for getting to the bike lockers. Keeping some of the Recessed Layout elements, like making the signature tree in the recessed area bigger and turning it into a larger lower plaza with that curve, might work. The wall by the parking in the Rectilinear Layout discourages bikes from cutting through the plaza. Bike riders are just going to curve as straight as possible and go right to that bike locker. I like options 2 [Recessed Layout] and 3 [Rectilinear Layout] the most. It is hard to pick one. The Rectilinear Layout feels like a lot of wasted space by the station entrance because of that cut-through ramp.	
I liked the Recessed Layout for the signature tree location, but I liked the Rectilinear Layout for the bike path location.	Comment noted.
In the Rectilinear Layout, I like that there were no steps or stairs, but the upper plaza is too plain. People should not be riding through the walking zone at all. We need a blending of the styles.	Comment noted.
I agree – perhaps a blending is necessary. There has to be a great congregation place in a lower and upper plaza. I do not know if the ramp is the right call because it	Comment noted.

takes up so much space and it is hard to do things on either side.	
Option 3 [Rectilinear Layout] has a well-pronounced access point from where cars drop off. 99% of people coming from the station come from parked automobiles. I like that there is a clear direction. It is nice to have the signature tree by the drop-off area for shade when you are waiting for your car.	Comment noted.
I like the Recessed Layout. A combination of the rectangular shapes with some curves would be better. I liked the lower plaza look; having another congregating space with seating is ideal because people like to sit in small groups. Having it by the drop-off zone is a great landmark — you can tell someone, 'I'm waiting by the oak tree.' I think the best solution lies in blending those two designs.	Comment noted.
The BART Station will be beautiful, but there will be a lot around it so I do not think we need to plan for it to be a unique attraction.	Comment noted.
I believe in placemaking. There are so many things nearby. The area will be densely populated, so we need these spaces.	Comment noted.
It is important for people to sit and pick you up in the lower plaza, but there should be places in the lower and upper plaza for people to sit.	Comment noted.

The Rectilinear Layout does a much better job of laying out the bike path, but the other ones are laid out better for making the plaza enjoyable.	Comment noted.
Instrumentation and Monitoring Overview	
Fantastic! I have heard about so many construction projects that mess up surrounding areas. My only comment regarding historic structures is that older concrete foundations are really susceptible to vibration and cracking. Is that going to be looked at? If you find out a foundation downtown is being negatively affected, what can you practically do? Do you just go slower with the TBM, or is there another way to mitigate?	All buildings in the zone of influence are assessed by engineers. Structures are categorized by risk profile, and those more at risk receive a higher level of protection or monitoring. If excessive settlement is seen, the team has trigger values and can employ mitigations like slowing operations or adjusting the TBM mode. Some buildings may also require structural mitigations prior to the TBM arriving.
Discussion & Feedback	No comments.

Upcoming CWG Meetings:

- December 2026 – Date TBA

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Distribution: Website, Email