

SAN CARLOS CALTRAIN TRANSIT VILLAGE PROJECT OVERVIEW

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Project Location:

The project site is comprised of a collection of parcels that run north and south of the San Carlos CalTrain station at the intersection of El Camino Real and San Carlos Avenue, located east of El Camino Real, and west of the railroad tracks, generally between Arroyo Avenue & Oak St in San Carlos, California. The site consists of approximately 8.7 acres (gross), and is owned by SamTrans and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board. It is located in the City of San Carlos West Side Specific Plan area. In the City of San Carlos General Plan, this area is located in the "North El Camino Real" geographic sub-area.

Section 4.920 (Implementation Goal) of Resolution 2003-79 to the West Side Specific Plan states that the entire study Railroad Corridor will be rezoned from CS (Highway Commercial Service) to the Planned Community Zoning District. The project will implement this goal.



Site Map

-  Development Boundaries
-  Landscaping portion
(extends from Arroyo Ave to approximately White Oak Way)



Project Description:

The developer, Legacy Partners Residential, Inc., has submitted an application on behalf of the property owner, Sam Trans, to redevelop the property into a “Transit Village”, which is a development involving mainly residential uses and some retail uses, and a multi-modal transit center situated south of the historic depot.

Project Components:

Housing - 280 luxury rental apartment units including market rate and affordably-priced apartments with semi-subterranean parking will be housed in six (6) two- to four-story wood frame buildings over semi-subterranean parking. The proposed unit mix includes 93 one (1) bedroom units, 132 two (2) bedroom units and 55 three (3) bedroom units, in a diverse array of sizes and floor plans.

Retail & Office Space - Approximately 14,000 square feet of upscale retail at street level and 16,000 square feet of second and third floor office space, including surface parking; retail plaza with water feature. Retail and office uses will be available in three buildings. Two buildings will be dedicated solely to retail/office space and will flank the historic Train Depot to the north and south, and a third retail space will be located at the ground level of the southernmost residential building.

CalTrain Station - The project includes a new transit center at the south end of the site. The Transit Center will provide the same number of parking spots as currently exist (226) and will include dedicated areas for shuttles, busses and taxis. It will also include a kiss and ride area that can be used to accommodate valet parking during non-peak transit hours.

While shuttles will continue to operate on the east side of the station, the creation of dedicated spots within the new transit center will accommodate any new shuttles, thus reducing the potential future impact of shuttles on the east side. The Transit Center will require a new signalized intersection at Cherry Street, which will require Caltrans approval.

These diverse uses will be supported by a destination outdoor plaza and will provide semi-subterranean and surface parking for residents, visitors, and commuters.

Project Management

- The City has hired Metropolitan Planning Group, a planning consulting firm, to manage this project. Whitney McNair is the main project manager, responsible for keeping the review process on task and on schedule.

Urban Design Consultant

- The City has hired Van Meter Williams Pollack (VMWP), an urban design consulting firm, to review the design proposal of the project. This effort is led by Rick Williams. The consultant’s role is to assist the city in ensuring the proposal addresses the City’s design goals and objectives, maintains an exceptional level of architectural design and fits into the fabric of the community.

Retail Analysis

- The City has hired the Rosenow Spevacek Group (RSG) to prepare a retail report to evaluate the retail component and determine if the proposed retail space represents the maximum potential for this site. The initial proposal included 8,000 to 10,000 square feet of commercial space. Through several iterations and discussions with city staff and guidance of the Council subcommittee, commercial/retail square footage was expanded to 34,600 square feet, of which approximately 15,600 square feet will be ground floor retail space and the remaining 19,000 square feet will be office. However, there is a potential for second floor retail or restaurant space.
- The findings of the RSG report state that the proposed amount of retail is best suited for this location and the long, narrow site configuration limits adding additional retail space to the proposal. A key objective is to link this new retail/commercial anchor to the west side of El Camino Real and strengthen pedestrian linkages into San Carlos Avenue and downtown. This will help add to the vitality of downtown and could be a catalyst for further revitalization of the remaining El Camino Real corridor. The RSG report is available upon request.

Fiscal Analysis

- In addition to the EIR, the City of San Carlos had a fiscal impact analysis of the Project completed for the purpose of evaluating the impact the Project will have on the City's fiscal budgets upon full operations. Since the Project is to be located in the San Carlos Redevelopment Area, the analysis considers the impacts of the Project on both the City of San Carlos' General Fund and the Redevelopment Agency's redevelopment and housing funds. CBRE Consulting performed this fiscal impact analysis on behalf of Legacy Partners.
- Annual City General Fund revenues project for the Project at buildout are \$139,723. General Fund expenditures for all major City of San Carlos departments were estimated for the Project. The resulting annual expenditure estimate is \$290,777 at buildout. Of this amount, \$207,772, or 71 percent, comprises costs for police and fire services. The net difference between the annual estimated General Fund revenues and expenditures for the Project results in an annual deficit of \$151,054, reflecting that expenditures are estimated to exceed revenues by this amount at buildout. In addition, and separate from the City's General Fund, the San Carlos RDA will receive tax increment revenues for its affordable housing fund as well as revenues to invest in infrastructure and other improvements in the redevelopment area as a result of the Project.
- The presence of the Project in the City of San Carlos Redevelopment Area means that the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) will receive tax increment revenues for its affordable housing fund as well as revenues to invest in infrastructure and other improvements in the redevelopment area as a result of the Project. The estimated adjusted tax increment revenues from the Project at buildout will be close to \$1.2 million. The RDA Housing Fund gets 20 percent of adjusted tax increment revenues set-aside for housing programs. As a result, the Project will generate approximately \$237,383 in RDA housing funds at buildout.
- At buildout, approximately \$368,182 in estimated tax increment revenues from the Project will be shared with San Mateo County for San Mateo County Library, as part of an RDA tax sharing agreement with the County. The project is expected to generate \$920,000 for San Carlos parks. Under current City requirement, the project is expected to generate over \$830,000 for the local school district, at the time of building permit issuance.

- At Project buildout, approximately \$34,895 in tax increment revenues from the Project will be diverted to meet statutory tax sharing payments.
- The project is expected to generate a total of \$6.9 million in estimated annual retail expenditures at buildout for San Carlos businesses.
- Net annual tax increment revenues to the City of San Carlos RDA are estimated to be \$546,457 at buildout. This is in addition to the estimated \$237,383 the Project will generate in RDA housing funds.
- In addition, and separate from the City's General Fund, the San Carlos RDA will receive tax increment revenues for its affordable housing fund as well as revenues to invest in infrastructure and other improvements in the redevelopment area as a result of the Project. CBRE Consulting estimates that the San Carlos RDA will receive \$262,090 in housing funds as the result of the Project and \$603,333 in net annual tax increment revenues in Fiscal Year 2017-2018.

Project Updates

- The proposed design of the site has been changed substantially since the beginning stages of design. Legacy and SamTrans have been actively meeting with various city officials and interest groups to receive their input on the project, and have been receptive to the feedback. As a result, the number of residential units has been reduced, while the amount of retail has been significantly increased.
- The original conceptual proposal brought to SamTrans by Legacy in March 2005 was to include 319 rental residential units and 6,000 square feet of retail. In November 2006, conceptual designs submitted to the City by Legacy included 29,500 square feet of retail alongside 280 residential units. The first formal application submitted to the City on May 29, 2007 had 34,600 square feet of retail and 281 rental residential units. The April 17, 2009 application had 38,123 square feet of retail and 280 rental residential units.
- Other significant changes in the most recent submittal:
 - Redesign of courtyards front El Camino Real to allow residential access to the street and share semi-private and private patio uses and to improve the pedestrian experience along that street.
 - Relocating residential lobbies to front El Camino Real, and contribute to the presence of the development on El Camino Real.
 - Revision of building massing to reflect the street grid of the eastern neighborhoods in order to create view corridors.
 - Increased visual screening between the project and the eastern neighborhood. In response to neighborhood requests, the design team worked extensively with CalTrain engineers to seek permission for planting on the CalTrain embankment.
 - Refined scale and materials of the retail buildings.
 - Redesign of the Public Plaza to connect to eastern neighborhoods, create a buffer between El Camino Real and the Depot, and better accommodate outdoor dining opportunities.
 - Further architectural, landscape, and civil engineering development.

Photographs of Existing Conditions



Caltrain station platform



View of depot.



View from San Carlos Avenue to Train Depot.



View of depot.



View of Bike storage and racks.



View of south end of site.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will this project have a negative financial impact to the City?

No, according to a Fiscal Impact Analysis for the San Carlos Transit Village performed by CBRE Consulting in March 2009, the project is forecasted to generate well over \$800,000 for the City annually through taxes and fees, while only costing the City about \$150,000.

The project is also expected to generate over \$920,000 for San Carlos parks and over \$830,000 for Sequoia Union School District at the time of building permit issuance. In addition, the project is expected to generate a total of \$6.9 Million in estimated annual retail expenditures at buildout for San Carlos businesses.

2. Who owns the proposed project site?

SamTrans and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board own the proposed project site. The City does not own the property. It is private property and the proposed project site is not available for sale to the City. The party who may develop the property is the property owner, SamTrans. The developer, Legacy Partners Residential Inc., has submitted an application on behalf of the property owner to redevelop the property into a Transit Village.

3. Is the Historic Depot part of the project?

No. The Historic Depot will remain as it is today. The historic depot is outside of the project and parcel boundaries, and the design of the development is required to "reflect and complement the architectural style of significant buildings within the community (such as the Train Depot...)" , as mandated by City of San Carlos [Resolution 2003-79](#).

4. What is the current and future zoning?

Currently, the site is zoned under the Highway Service Commercial Zoning District (CS-H). Section 4.920 (Implementation Goal) of the Resolution 2003-79 states that "Implementation of the project shall be accomplished by rezoning the entire study corridor to the Planned Community Zoning District pursuant to San Carlos Municipal Code Section 18.104.050". The project site is not "open space" as defined by zoning law.

5. Who ultimately decides on the project?

The project is reviewed by the City of San Carlos Planning Commission, which makes a recommendation to the City Council for a final decision.

6. What is the City's role in the proposed project?

The property is within the City of San Carlos and therefore the City has the responsibility to review and consider the application proposed by the developer. As part of the review, the City analyzes the environmental impacts from the project, resulting in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The City also considers the design of the project and has hired an architectural consultant to evaluate the plans and provide the City with feedback. The City utilizes an economic consultant to peer review any fiscal impacts from the project. The project will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council

in a public review process. In sum, the City's role is to review and coordinate input on the various impacts of the development on the City.

7. When will the project be built?

The project is in the early review stages with the City of San Carlos. It is likely that the project will not be under construction for at least 18 months.

Currently, the San Carlos Planning Department is reviewing the design of the project and the City is preparing a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). It is estimated that the draft EIR will be completed later this year.

8. Will there be adequate parking for residents, shoppers, employees and commuters?

The SCTV Transit Center will provide the same number of parking spots for the CalTrain station as currently exist (226). Approximately 47 of these spaces will be short term parking and will be shared with retail users. An additional 19 spaces will be dedicated solely to the retail surrounding the plaza. SCTV will provide the recommended parking ratio for the retail users to encourage patronage of the new businesses.

A total of 456 parking spaces will be provided for the 280 apartments, resulting in a ratio of 1.63 parking stalls for every apartment. This parking ratio is in line with average parking ratios of similar transit oriented apartment communities around the Bay Area.

9. What building techniques will be put in place to control noise from passing trains?

Noise inside the apartments will be mitigated in several ways. Windows and doors rated for high noise level environments will be used throughout the buildings. Special construction methods will be used such as sound-rated walls, acoustical caulk and special insulation.

In addition, the buildings will be set back 55 feet or further from the train tracks as recommended by the acoustical consultant for the project.

10. How will the project affect overall vehicular traffic in San Carlos?

Although it would seem that the project has the potential to contribute to traffic congestion along Holly and El Camino, we plan to implement Trip Reduction Measures to ensure this does not occur. By providing subsidized transit passes, unbundled residential parking prices, priced employee parking, a transportation information center, and abundant bicycle parking, we plan to mitigate the creation of additional traffic as a result of the project.

The close proximity of the site to transit, along with the proposed improvements to pedestrian crossings at El Camino and Holly and El Camino and San Carlos Ave., and the wider sidewalks along El Camino, will encourage residents, commuters, and visitors to use alternate means of transportation in the area.

11. When the project is constructed, will the frequency of train and bus service be increased?

The frequency of train and bus service is entirely dependent on ridership levels, not SCTV itself. According to the Nelson/Nygard "Transit Ridership Impacts of the Proposed San Carlos Transit Village" study dated 3/27/09, the project is expected to increase SamTrans bus ridership 10-13% and Caltrain trips to and from the San Carlos station by 5 – 9 %.

12. How will the project affect the proposed high-speed rail service?

The project will not affect the proposed high-speed rail service because the project site design already incorporates the necessary space for the future high speed rail service.

13. How will the shadow of this project impact the surrounding neighborhoods?

Our preliminary studies indicate that the shadows will have minimal impact on the neighbors to the East as the existing Caltrain berm already casts similar shadows late in the day. Due to the distance of the buildings to the west of the tracks, the shadows from the buildings will occur only a few minutes before the shadows caused by the existing berm. The distance of the project to the nearest eastern neighbor is approximately 176'.

14. How will this project impact neighborhood schools?

Preliminary data from the PBS&J, the consultant which the City of San Carlos hired to do the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the San Carlos Transit Village, concludes that the impacts to the local school will be less than significant.

Any impact to local schools resulting from SCTV will be mitigated by school impact fees that the Developer is required to pay prior to obtaining a construction permit. Under current City requirements, SCTV is expected to generate over \$830,000 for the local school district.

Apartment communities of similar density and location to SCTV on the Peninsula and Silicon Valley typically have very few families with school-age children as residents. Surveys of similar communities has shown that families with children desire lower density housing with outdoor play areas and more room within the units.

Student generation reports conducted recently for proposed high density apartments in North San Jose predicted that only 2 -3 school-age children would be living in every 100 high density apartments. This means that approximately 6 – 8 students can be expected to live in the San Carlos Transit Village.

15. What are the Below Market Rate (BMR) units regulations that the project is required to comply with?

The Zoning Ordinance ([Chapter 18.200 - Below Market Rate Housing Program](#)) requires a 15% minimum of BMR units for developments of 7 units and over, spread between various income levels and dispersed throughout development, with features indistinguishable from market rate standard units. In this case, it would mean a minimum of 42 BMR units out of 281 proposed residential units (and a partial fee for the fraction).

(Per 2008 San Mateo County Income Limits, as defined by HUD and the State of California, the median household income in the City for a family of four is \$94,300. Please refer to this [webpage](#) under the Housing Department for more information.)

16. What is the purpose of an EIR?

The purpose of an EIR is to provide public agencies and the public in general with detailed information about the effects a proposed project is likely to have on the environment; to list ways in which the significant effects of the proposed project might be minimized; and to identify and analyze alternatives to the proposed project (CEQA Statues and Guidelines 21061, 2007).

17. How can I participate? Where can I voice my concerns?

There are many opportunities to participate. Study sessions will be held at Planning Commission and City Council meetings to review the project, where you can speak out about your concerns. Upcoming meetings will be posted on the website.

You can also get involved during the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process. For more information about upcoming meetings and to get the latest update on the project status, please visit the City's web site: http://www.cityofsancarlos.org/planning/projects/san_carlos_transit_village