

Comment Letter A11—Santa Clara Valley Water District, Sue A. Tippets, P.E., CFM (letter dated November 23, 2015)

Letter A11

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File: 33212
San Tomas Aquino Creek

November 23, 2015

Ms. Debby Fernandez
Associate Planner
City of Santa Clara
Planning Division
1500 Warburton Avenue
City of Santa Clara, CA 95050



Subject: City Place Santa Clara Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Ms Fernandez:

- A11.1

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the subject document. The City Place project considers the redevelopment of about 240 acres roughly bounded by Highway 237, Guadalupe River, Tasman Drive and San Tomas Aquino Creek.

The Santa Clara Valley Water District is a special district with jurisdiction throughout Santa Clara County and is the county's primary water resources agency. The District acts as the county's groundwater management agency, principal water resources manager, flood protection agency and is the steward for its watersheds, streams and creeks, and underground aquifers. We offer the following comments for consideration.

Page 1-3: CEQA Process - Our records do not show that the Notice of Preparation for this project was provided to the District for review. Please ensure that the District is included in referral protocol.
- A11.2

Page 2-36: The project includes a new vehicular bridge crossing over San Tomas Aquino Creek on District property. Approval of this crossing is a discretionary action by the District, therefore, the Santa Clara Valley Water District should be included as a responsible agency.
- A11.3

Page 2-17: The project proposes a bridge crossing of San Tomas Aquino Creek. The District, City staff and the developer have been in discussion relative to this bridge design, in particular relative to grades, the number of spans, cross connections for District maintenance access and trail continuation around or under the bridge. San Tomas Aquino Creek is subject to tidal influence in this area and sediment accumulation. Sediment removal is a significant maintenance activity for the District on a frequent and costly basis. This bridge would add another crossing on the creek under which sediment removal cannot be accomplished using top of bank excavating equipment. The bridge increases the number of creek crossing in the reach between Great America Parkway and the southerly end of the Levi Stadium project to eight crossings Cumulative impacts of bridge crossings should be considered.

Our mission is to provide Silicon Valley safe, clean water for a healthy life, environment, and economy.

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- A11.4 | Page 2-36: Approval for the proposed bridge crossing of San Tomas Aquino Creek will be required from the Water District. Please include the Santa Clara Valley Water District as a responsible agency.
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- A11.5 | Page 3.10-9: Please note that the City of Santa Clara not the Santa Clara Valley Water District has jurisdiction over the conveyance of stormwater to the creeks.
- A11.6 | Figure 3.10-3: The watershed boundary for San Tomas creek conflicts with District mapping of the watershed.
- A11.7 | Page 3.10-17: FEMA is in the process of remapping the coastal floodplain. This information should be included in the environmental impact report because the 100 year floodplain would expand in that area if their modeling is adopted. It appears that most of the proposed changes would occur in adjacent off site areas. One good information source about this can be found here: <http://www.r9map.org/Pages/ProjectDetailsPage.aspx?choLoco=43&choProj=467>.
- A11.8 | Page 3.10-18: On this page and several others within the DEIR, there is a statement that the District has not reported any flooding issues due to storm drain capacity in the area. This information is not within the purview of the District and should be sought from the City.
- The area on the effective FEMA map zoned "AO" located immediately adjacent to and east of the new stadium is due to a lack of capacity of the storm drain system.
- It should be noted that the existing 100 year peak flow capacity of San Tomas Aquino Creek is not the design flow for the creek. The ultimate 1% design flow is 9100 cfs. Because of an upstream restriction and spill the 1% peak flow is not conveyed within the channel. Future modifications, likely an increase in levee height or addition of a floodwall will be needed to contain the design flow.
- A11.9 | Page 3.10-35: The document states that the project is located at the downstream end of both San Tomas Aquino Creek and Guadalupe River, which still have capacity for some additional flow. The basis for this conclusion is not substantiated and should not imply that increases in discharge, constriction of the channel or redirection of flow from another watershed can be accommodated.
- A11.10 | Page 3.10-37: Impact WQ-7 states that the new bridge will be designed so as to facilitate passage of 100 year flows. The bridge design must also consider erosive action or redirection of flow during more frequent events. Impact WQ-8 does not discuss exposure of people or structures form levee failure.

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Groundwater

Pages 3.14-9 & 10: The DEIR and WSA make numerous statements regarding the groundwater basin yield and safe yields. The following statement is appropriate: "*The allowable withdrawal or safe yield of groundwater by the City is dependent on a number of factors...*"

A11.11

However, the following statement on page 3.14-10, may not be appropriate: "*The projected cumulative 2035 demand level would also be substantially below the basin's estimated 200,000 af./yr. safe yield. Although the current projected water supplies already cover the projected growth in the 2010 UWMP, the remaining available safe yield groundwater supplies coupled with the City's lower than projected current groundwater demands provide room for growth above and beyond 2035 projections.*" Please note that it is not appropriate to make conclusions regarding the safe and sustainable groundwater production volumes by the City based on these values. First, sustainable yields are subject to the hydrology, groundwater storage in a given year, and the specific geographic distribution of groundwater pumping in a localized area. Furthermore, some of the stated values are being reconsidered in the current analysis for the District's upcoming Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan.

Appendix 3.14
Water Supply Assessment

A11.12

Page 5, Table 1b: This table shows in the absence of future SFPUC supplies the water supply loss is made up by groundwater: 23,048 AF, the highest historical pumping (Page 9, Figure 3). On Page 9, Figure 4, the hydrograph for Index Well 07S01E07R013 shows that groundwater elevations were below (exceeding) the subsidence threshold elevation. Even though the WSA indicates that the basin was not approaching overdraft, sustained pumping at levels which cause groundwater elevations to fall below the subsidence threshold, are of concern and increase the risk of subsidence resuming.

A11.13

Page 10, Table 2: This table shows projected groundwater use by water retailers in the year 2035 (as shown in their 2010 UWMPs). The last column showing pumping of 114,955 AF seems to be in line with the 1993 to 2013 yearly water retailer combined average pumping of 117,700 AF. Please note, that while the total pumping is in the average range, the geographic distribution of pumping is an important consideration in terms of groundwater sustainability. The second to last column showing 166,400 AF is not even within the peak use over this period. This level of pumping (166,400 AF) is outside of normal pumping and may not be sustainable.

A11.14

Page 11: The Water District is dedicated to ensuring a reliable supply of healthy, clean drinking water now and in the future. To do this, the quality and quantity of existing water supply sources, including groundwater, must be sustained and protected. Additionally, water conservation and recycled water use are increasingly important components of the County's water supply portfolio. Given the cumulative water demand to meet the needs of projected growth throughout northern Santa Clara County, as documented by ABAG and in each of the local jurisdictions' General Plans, measures should be incorporated to minimize water use. These could include provisions for recycled water, enhanced requirements for water saving devices within new structures, and enhanced limitations to landscaping.

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A11.15 | Page 13: As stated, District staff agrees with the WSA that previous UWMP water demands are conservative; however, we caution the use of 2010 water use data as validation of that assumption. Water demand across the county declined significantly during the economic decline late last decade, and is not by itself proof that previous demands were overestimated. Prior to the current drought and with improved economic conditions early this decade, water use partially rebounded from the previous multiyear decline.

A11.16 | Page 16: District staff support and endorse the consideration of installation of dual plumbing at the project site for future connection to nonpotable water supplies such as recycled water, and the exclusive use of nonpotable water supplies for all outdoor irrigation purposes. If appropriate, we recommend that the City make this a project requirement. We also recommend using the requirements of the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) a design standard for the project.

Sincerely,



Sue A. Tippetts P.E. CFM
Engineering Manager
Community Projects Review Unit

cc: L. Lee, A. Rouhani, Liang Xu, E. Zedler, T. Hemmeter, C. Tulloch, H. Ashktorab,
S. Tippetts, U. Chatwani, File

Response to Comment Letter A11—Santa Clara Valley Water District, Sue A. Tippetts, P.E., CFM (letter dated November 23, 2015)

A11.1 *The commenter states that they did not receive the Notice of Preparation for the Project. As described on page 1-3 of the Draft EIR, the City published two separate Notices of Preparation (NOPs). First, on July 10, 2014, the City published an NOP for the Centennial Gateway Mixed-Use Project, to be located at 5120 Stars and Stripes Drive, as proposed by the Montana Property Group (MPG). Shortly thereafter, on July 30, 2014, the City published an NOP for the City Place Project, directly adjacent to the Centennial Gateway site, at 5155 Stars and Stripes. Both NOPs were released for a 30-day public review period. The City will ensure that the Santa Clara Water District is included in the noticing process for this Project in the future.*

A11.2 *The commenter suggests that the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) be included as a responsible agency. As described on page 2-17 of the Draft EIR, the Project includes a new vehicular bridge crossing over San Tomas Aquino Creek. The new bridge would be located on SCVWD property. Therefore, as approvals of this crossing are a discretionary action by the SCVWD, SCVWD should be included as a responsible agency. The following text has been added to the end of the list of approvals by Responsible Agencies on page 2-37 of the Draft EIR:*

- Santa Clara Valley Water District – approval of the vehicular overcrossing of the San Tomas Aquino Creek.

A11.3 *The commenter states that sedimentation occurs in San Tomas Aquino Creek (Creek) and that the bridge crossing over the Creek will prohibit the use of top of bank excavating equipment. The commenter requests that the cumulative impacts of the San Tomas Aquino Creek Bridge (Bridge) are analyzed in the EIR. Page 3.8-27 of the Draft EIR acknowledges that installation of the Bridge could cumulatively result in temporary and permanent impacts on San Tomas Aquino Creek (associated with a new bridge and storm drain outfalls). Mitigation Measures BIO-5.1 and BIO-5.2 are prescribed to avoid and minimize these impacts. The Project Developer is also required to comply with the San Francisco Bay Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Permit requirements (SF Bay MS4 Permit), Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP) requirements, Construction NPDES General Permit, and the City's stormwater requirements.*

The fact that SCVWD may need to conduct sediment removal under the proposed new bridge crossing by means of a method that is different than the operation of top of bank excavating equipment is not considered to be an impact under CEQA. As a result, there would be no cumulative impacts regarding the increase in the number of bridge crossings. The SCVWD continues to conduct sediment removal activities at other bridges crossings along the Creek, and it is expected to be able to continue those activities following implementation of the Project. Cumulative impacts are addressed only for those thresholds that would result in Project-related impacts. The Project was analyzed under CEQA for the potential to contribute sediments to the Creek, and impacts were found to be less than significant. Sedimentation in the Creek is likely due to tidal influence from the Bay and significant channel modifications due to development in upstream areas of the Creek in the Project vicinity. During construction of the bridge crossing, the Project would be required to implement best management practices (BMPs), such as erosion control measures, dewatering during pile driving activities, and water quality monitoring in

compliance with water quality permits (i.e., Construction General Permit and the 401 Water Quality Certification).

Normal Project operations following construction of the bridge crossing, and the collection of stormwater at new and existing storm drain inlets throughout the Project site leading to new stormwater outfalls within the Creek, would not result in disturbances to the Creek. As explained on page 3.10-27 of the Draft EIR, the Project is exempt from SCVURPPP Provisions C.3.f.i (Hydromodification Control Requirements) because this provision does not apply to projects that discharge to hardened or tidally influenced portions of channels where increased discharges present minimal potential for erosion or other impacts on beneficial uses. However, the Project would be required to comply with the SF Bay MS4 Permit because it would involve the replacement of impervious surface area equal to 50 percent or more of the pre-Project impervious surface area. In compliance with Provision C.3, the Project would be designed with stormwater control measures, as described in Mitigation Measure WQ-1.1 in Section 3.10, *Hydrology and Water Quality*. These measures would help filter out sediments and other contaminants from stormwater, and therefore prevent them from entering the storm drain inlets and Creek. In addition, the Project would be coordinated with the SCVWD to ensure the locations of stormwater outfalls are above sediment levels within the Creek.

A11.4 *The commenter suggests that the Santa Clara Valley Water District be included as a responsible agency. Please refer to Response A11.2, above.*

A11.5 *The commenter states that the City of Santa Clara, not the Santa Clara Valley Water District, has jurisdiction over the conveyance of stormwater to the creeks. In response to this comment, the first sentence in the second full paragraph on page 3.10-9 has been modified as follows:*

The SCVWD ~~has jurisdiction over~~ maintains flood control features within and along San Tomas Aquino Creek and the Guadalupe River,⁸ such as their existing levees, and the ~~The City manages~~ conveyance of stormwater to these waterways.

⁸ The levee along Guadalupe River is owned and also maintained by USACE.

In addition, Draft EIR text referring to the outfalls being designed pursuant to SCVWD's outfall standards has been modified to City of Santa Clara storm drainage design criteria¹ and SCVWD guidance. The second sentence of the first bullet on page 3.10-32 has been revised as follows:

The invert of the outfalls will be set above the bottom of ~~the creek~~ San Tomas Aquino Creek; the final elevation, as well as other elements, will be designed pursuant to the City of Santa Clara's standards, consistent with SCVWD's ~~outfall standards guidance,~~⁶⁴ and coordinated with the SCVWD to ensure the location is above sediment levels within the creek.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Outfalls and work within the SCVWD right-of-way are subject to approval and issuance of permits by the SCVWD.

¹ City of Santa Clara. 2015. *Design Criteria for Improvements in Public Right-of-Ways and City Easements*. Public Works Department. April. Available: <<http://santaclaraca.gov/home/showdocument?id=14345>>. Accessed: December 29, 2015.

A11.6 *The commenter states that the watershed boundary for San Tomas Aquino Creek on Figure 3.10-3 conflicts with District mapping of the watershed. Figure 3.10-3, Existing Subwatersheds within the Project Area, depicts on-site drainage areas in the immediate Project vicinity. Therefore, these localized drainage boundaries are not consistent with SCVWD's larger natural watershed boundaries. The SCVWD watershed areas were added to Figure 3.10-2 of the Draft EIR, Hydrological Features within the Project Vicinity, where it seemed more appropriate as that figure shows a larger geographic context than Figure 3.10-3. The revised Figure 3.10-2 shows the water bodies within the Project vicinity (from the USGS National Hydrography Dataset) including those nearby water features potentially affected by the Project. Figure 3.10-3 shows the drainage areas (referred to as subwatersheds) specifically within the immediate Project area (from USGS topographic and drainage infrastructure data). The information shown on Figure 3.10-3 was used to conduct the Project drainage analysis. In response to this comment, the following text has been added to the first paragraph under the subheading *Watershed Hydrology* on page 3.10-9 of the Draft EIR:*

Figure 3.10-2 illustrates the hydrological features in the Project area. According to SCVWD watershed boundaries,⁷ the majority of the Project area is located within the Guadalupe River watershed, but a small area within the western portion of Parcel 4 is located within the San Tomas Aquino Creek watershed. Both the San Tomas Aquino Creek and Guadalupe River watersheds ultimately drain to the Lower San Francisco Bay watershed.

⁷ Santa Clara Valley Water District. 2015. *Santa Clara Valley Water District Geographic Information Systems Gallery*. Santa Clara County Watersheds shapefile layers. Available: <<https://valleywater.maps.arcgis.com/home/gallery.html#c=organization&o=numviews&f=layers-layerfiles>>. Accessed on December 29, 2015.

A11.7 *The commenter states that FEMA is in the process of remapping the coastal floodplain, and that this information should be included in the discussion on page 3.10-17 of the EIR because the 100-year floodplain would expand in that area if modeling is adopted. The following footnote was added to the description of SCVWD's levee modifications to protect from flooding in adjacent offsite areas (page 3.10-18):*

The SCVWD ~~has jurisdiction over~~ maintains flood control facilities along the San Tomas Aquino Creek and the Guadalupe River, such as their existing levees, and the City manages conveyance of stormwater to these waterways. Because the existing levees adjacent to the Project site are certified by FEMA, any impacts on or modifications to the levee will require SCVWD review and approval and may require a submission to FEMA for levee recertification.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ FEMA is in the process of conducting a Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and revising flood and wave data for the Santa Clara County FIS report and FIRM panels along the San Francisco Bay shoreline. The FIS may result in an expansion of the 100-year floodplain into adjacent off-site areas. The SCVWD's levee modifications would help protect these areas.

A11.8 *The commenter suggests that the information in the statement on page 3.10-18 of the Draft EIR and several others that the District has not reported any flooding issues due to storm drain capacity in the area is not within the purview of the District and should be sought from the City.*

The commenter is correct in that the City maintains and operates the municipal storm drain system and would be responsible for providing information on storm drain system capacity. Although the City monitors the storm drain system itself, all outfalls and work done within SCVWD's right-of-way is subject to approval by SCVWD. Therefore, coordination of information regarding flooding issues will be necessary in designing the new outfalls in relation to storm system capacity. In response to this comment, the second sentence in the third paragraph on page 3.10-18 has been revised, as follows:

San Tomas Aquino Creek is within Zone AE (100-year flood zone) and the Guadalupe River is also within Zone AE (100-year flood zone) in the northern portion and Zone A to the south of the Project area. However, the existing Guadalupe River and San Tomas Aquino Creek are contained within FEMA certified levees ~~and the SCVWD has not reported any flooding issues due to storm drain capacity in the area.~~ The off-site area in Tasman East that would accommodate the Lick Mill Boulevard extension is located within Zone AH.

In addition, the last two sentences of the first full paragraph, under Impact WQ-4, were deleted on page 3.10-35 of the Draft EIR:

~~The phasing of the Project, as well as other City development projects within the tributary areas, would require modifications to stormwater management measures to be completed as the final development plans for each phase are approved. The SCVWD has not reported any flooding issues related to storm drain capacity in the area. The Project would be located at the downstream end of both waterways, which still have capacity for some additional flows.~~

The third full paragraph under Impact WQ-4 on page 3.10-35 of the Draft EIR has been deleted, as follows:

~~The SCVWD has not reported any flooding issues related to storm drain capacity in the area. The Project would be located at the downstream end of both waterways, which still have capacity for some additional flows.~~

Although these statements were removed, the associated discussion or conclusions in the EIR do not change. If future modifications to the storm drain facilities and/or levees are required by the SCVWD adjacent to the Project area to ensure flood protection, then the City will coordinate with the SCVWD to design the site infrastructure accordingly.

The commenter also states that the 100-year design flow in San Tomas Aquino Creek is actually 9,100 cfs, and that the creek currently does not convey that due to an upstream restriction and spillway. The following text in the Flooding Section of the Environmental Setting in the first paragraph describing System Flow Capacities (page 3.10-18) was modified as follows:

San Tomas Aquino Creek Direct (Parcel 4). The existing ~~100-year peak~~ design flow in San Tomas Aquino Creek is approximately 7,100 cubic feet per second (cfs) within the section of the creek adjacent to Parcel 4.⁴⁸ The corresponding ~~100-year peak~~ water surface elevation is 19.39 above msl at the Great America Parkway crossing and 21.16 msl at Tasman Drive.

⁴⁸ The ultimate 100-year design flow in San Tomas Aquino Creek is 9,100 cfs, but because of an upstream restriction and spillway, the 100-year peak flow is not currently conveyed within the channel. Future modifications, such as an increase in levee height or addition of a floodwall will be needed to contain the design flow. For the Project, the design flow of 7,100 cfs was used for the analysis of Project impacts on stormwater capacity and 100-year flood elevation in the San Tomas Aquino Creek.

In addition, the following changes were made to the first paragraph in the discussion in Impact WQ-4 on page 3.10-35:

As stated in Impact WQ-3, a preliminary evaluation of the drainage infrastructure for the Project indicated sufficient capacity to convey 100-year peak or appropriate design flows for flood control.⁶⁷ However, some of the infrastructure may be included in ~~City improvement projects, such~~ as upgrades to the off-site system near Parcel 3 and the Eastside Pump Station and clearing of the Eastside Drainage Channel, as required by Mitigation Measure WQ-3.2. Additional runoff from the Project site will not result in an increase to 100-year flood elevations or existing design flow capacities, as required by the SCVWD.

Mitigation Measure WQ-3.1 on page 3.10-34 has been modified as follows:

WQ-3.1: Design New Bridge and Outfall Structures to Avoid Increase in 100-year Flow or Existing Design Flow and Channel Erosion. In compliance with the SCVWD's 100-year peak flood requirements, any new bridge and new outfalls in San Tomas Aquino Creek shall be designed to avoid increases in the 100-year flow and to avoid creek bed/channel erosion. The design shall also consider erosive action or redirection of flow during more frequent flood events in compliance with the City of Santa Clara's storm drainage design criteria⁷² and consistent with SCVWD's guidance.⁷³ The outfalls will be set at elevations high enough to ensure the location of outfalls are above sediment levels within the bottom of the creek.⁷⁴ The design shall be provided to the City of Santa Clara and the SCVWD for review and approval for the Project. Construction would be done in phases. For example, the new bridge over the San Tomas Creek would not be needed until Phase 4 2 and outfalls to the eastside drainage ditch would not be needed until ~~Phases 6, 7, and 8~~ later phases. The design review approval of outfalls shall occur prior to the issuance of the building permit for the development that triggers the need for the outfall or associated construction activity, and on a schedule similar to the phases of construction.

⁷² City of Santa Clara. 2015. Design Criteria for Improvements in Public Right-of-Ways and City Easements. Public Works Department. April. Available: <http://santaclaraca.gov/home/showdocument?id=14345>. Accessed: 12/29/15.

⁷³ Santa Clara Valley Water District. 2006. User Manual: Guidelines & Standards for Land Use Near Streams. A Manual of Tools, Standards, and Procedures to Protect Streams and Streamside Resources in Santa Clara County. Prepared by the Santa Clara Valley Water Resources Protection Collaborative. Originally adopted in August 2005. Revised: July 2006.

⁷⁴ Outfalls and work within the SCVWD right-of-way are subject to approval and issuance of permits by the SCVWD.

The last sentence in the second paragraph on page 3.10-34 of the Draft EIR has been revised as follows:

As described in Mitigation Measure WQ-1.1, site drainage will be designed to avoid increasing 100-year flows or existing design flows of the adjacent San Tomas Aquino Creek and the Guadalupe River.

The second full paragraph on page 3.10-29 in Mitigation Measure WQ-1.1 has been modified as follows:

The stormwater treatment measures shall capture sufficient flows so that 100-year peak flood elevations or existing design flows within San Tomas Aquino Creek and the Guadalupe River will not increase as part of the Project. The exact reduction in 100-year peak runoff volumes and flows that the stormwater management measures will need to accommodate will be determined during the design process for the stormwater management measures and will be provided in the detailed Project Stormwater Management Plan.

Although these statements were modified, the associated discussion or conclusions in the EIR do not change. These changes do not affect the conclusion of the analysis because the flow used in the analysis for San Tomas Creek was the current design flow, not the 100-year peak flow, and, therefore, the conclusions for the impact analyses did not change as a result.

A11.9 *The commenter refers to the statement on page 3.10-35 that there is still capacity within the downstream ends of the San Tomas Aquino Creek and Guadalupe River, and suggests that this information implies that increased flows or channel constriction could be accommodated. The commenter states that this information is unsubstantiated and should not be included in the discussion. Please see Response A11.8, above, for text changes to the Draft EIR on page 3.10-35. Although these statements were removed, the associated discussion or conclusions in the EIR do not change because 100-year peak flood elevations and existing design flows within San Tomas Creek and the Guadalupe River would not be exceeded due to the implementation of stormwater management measures to reduce post-Project flows. If future modifications to the storm drain facilities and/or levees are required by the SCVWD adjacent to Project area to ensure flood protection, then the City will coordinate with the SCVWD to design the site infrastructure accordingly.*

A11.10 *The commenter suggests that the discussion in Impact WQ-7 (Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, page 3.10-37) should include that the design must also consider erosive action or redirection of flow during more frequent flood events. The commenter also states that the analysis in Impact WQ-8 does not discuss exposure of people or structures from levee failure. This comment refers to Mitigation Measure WQ-3.1 on page 3.10-34. Please see Response A11.8, above, for revisions to Mitigation Measure WQ-3.1.*

Impact WQ-7 addresses impedance of flood flows, whereas Impact WQ-3 addresses changes to drainage patterns and resulting erosion, siltation, or flooding. The discussion of this information has been added to Impact WQ-3 in the third paragraph on page 3.10-34:

The bridge constructed above San Tomas Aquino Creek has not yet been designed but may affect 100-year flood flows or the existing design flow. Mitigation Measure WQ-3.1 requires new bridge and outfall structures to be designed to facilitate passage of the

100-year flow and existing design flow, and to prevent erosive action or redirection of flow during more frequent flood events. In addition, the new outfalls within San Tomas Aquino Creek have not yet been designed but could also affect 100-year flood flows and cause changes to the existing channel morphology. Implementation of Mitigation Measure WQ-3 will minimize these impacts. Impacts of the new bridge and outfalls could be *significant*.

In response to the comment about the lack of discussion regarding levee failure, the following discussion has been added as the fourth paragraph to the Impact WQ-8 analysis on page 3.10-38:

Levees can fail because of earthquakes or storm events, if not properly maintained or reinforced to withstand potential stresses. The SCVWD maintains the banks and levees along San Tomas Aquino Creek. Recent efforts include the 2012 San Tomas Aquino Creek bank repair project and the 2014 San Tomas Aquino Creek storm drain outfall repair). The SCVWD and USACE maintain the levees along the Guadalupe River. Recent flood control projects, such as the Guadalupe River Flood Protection Project, help reduce the potential for levee failure. As described in Mitigation Measures WQ-3.1 and 3.2, the Project would be designed to result in no increase in peak flows from the Project compared to pre-development conditions in order to satisfy the SCVWD 100-year peak flood elevation criteria. This would reduce the potential for the Project to cause overtopping or levee failure as a result of increased flows, and therefore minimize the exposure of people and structures to flood risks. In addition, the majority of the Project site (Parcels 1 through 5) is above the grade of the surrounding streets, with the elevated portions having an elevation ranging from approximately 21 to 65 feet above msl. All residential and commercial structures would be placed within these elevated portions, which place them outside of the area of inundation due to levee failure. The surrounding at-grade areas consist of roads and a proposed fire station (Option 2). The area for the proposed fire station (Option 2) is currently protected by levees along San Tomas Aquino Creek, but with no increase in discharge from the Project and SCVWD maintenance of the levees and other flood control facilities along the creek, the levees are not expected to fail.

Although Lenihan Dam may incur some settlement during a major earthquake, as noted above, the SCVWD maintains that the dam structure overall should remain intact, and the potential for significant crack formation is low. No residential or commercial structures would be placed within an area vulnerable to inundation due to levee failure. The proposed fire station (Option 2) is the only structure that may be placed within an area at risk of inundation in the event of levee failure along San Tomas Aquino Creek. With no increase in discharge from the Project and SCVWD maintenance of the levees and other flood control facilities along the creek, the potential for levee failure would be substantially minimized. In the event of a levee failure, emergency response measures would be implemented at the fire station. These measures will be included in the City's flood warning and emergency response plan, as described in Mitigation Measure WQ-6.1. Therefore, because the risk of failure of the dam is considered remote, and because the City's flood warning and emergency response plan would be implemented in the unlikely event that a failure did occur, the Project would not present a significant risk of loss, injury, or death to people or structures involving flooding, including flooding

as a result of the failure of a levee or dam. Therefore, this would be a ***less-than-significant*** impact.

A11.11 *The commenter states that it is inappropriate to make conclusions regarding safe and sustainable groundwater production values by the City.* Section 10910(f)(5) of the California Water Code requires a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) to include “[a]n analysis of the sufficiency of the groundwater ... to meet the projected water demand associated with the proposed project.” Sustainable yields of any groundwater basin will depend on many factors and may change over time. Nonetheless, an estimated sustainable yield must be determined to undertake the required analysis. The 200,000 acre-feet per year figure utilized in the WSA prepared for the Project (Appendix 3.14 of the Draft EIR) is from the City of Santa Clara 2010 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), which in turn was based upon discussions with SCVWD staff.² Furthermore, as noted by the commenter, the WSA determined that the projected cumulative 2035 demand level would be “substantially” below the Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Basin’s estimated safe yield. Therefore, the basin’s acre-feet per year safe yield could still meet the 2035 cumulative demand level even if it were lower than the SCVWD’s current estimate. It is noted that the SCVWD is reconsidering values concerning groundwater basin yields. However, these figures are not yet available, nor have they been adopted in a final report by the District Board. Therefore, the figures cannot be used.

A11.12 *The commenter states that sustained groundwater pumping at levels that could cause groundwater elevations to exceed the subsidence threshold elevation increase the risk of subsidence resuming.* Groundwater elevations are determined by a multitude of factors including precipitation, SCVWD groundwater recharge operations, and groundwater pumping. Years of high groundwater pumping do not necessarily result in lowered groundwater levels, as shown in the figures cited by the commenter. Specifically, Figure 3 on page 9 of the WSA, in Appendix 3.14 of the Draft EIR, shows that the highest historical pumping in the City of Santa Clara took place in 1987. However, the hydrograph for Index Well 07S01E07R013 provided on page 9 of the WSA shows that groundwater elevations were above subsidence levels in 1987. By contrast, in 1988 and 1989, groundwater elevations did reach the subsidence threshold even though groundwater pumping in those years dropped substantially to just under 13,000 acre feet for the year in 1989. Therefore, Figures 3 and 4 in the WSA do not support the premise that pumping 23,048 acre-feet per year would cause groundwater elevations to fall below the subsidence threshold, nor that pumping at that level would increase the risk of subsidence resuming. In the event that drought conditions existed and a supply shortage reduced SCVWD recharge operations, the City’s Water Shortage Contingency Plan would require water demand reductions throughout the City in order to avoid groundwater levels falling to the subsidence threshold.

A11.13 *The commenter states that geographic distribution of pumping is an important consideration regarding groundwater sustainability and that the pumping of 166,400 acre-feet may not be sustainable.* The geographic distribution of pumping is important to groundwater sustainability, which is why the wells owned and operated by the City of Santa Clara are distributed throughout the City and operated to minimize the effects on any particular geographic area.

² Per the City of Santa Clara 2010 Urban Water Management Plan, page 28, “Santa Clara Valley Water District staff estimates the operational storage capacity of the sub-basin to be 350,000 acre-feet *with an estimated limit of 200,000 acre-feet maximum withdrawal in any one year*” (emphasis added).

Due to the timing of the 2010 UWMP, the UWMP made assumptions on groundwater pumping projections for retailers utilizing the Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Basin. Table 2 on page 10 of the WSA (Appendix 3.14 of the Draft EIR) shows the difference between the amount of groundwater use assumed in the 2010 UWMP for each water service provider and the actual groundwater use projections that were subsequently provided in each water service provider's individual urban water management plans. As stated on pages 10 and 11 of the WSA, "Table 2 shows that the actual groundwater use projections are substantially lower than estimated for the water service providers considered in the 2010 UWMP. By 2035, the 2010 UWMP estimates indicate that Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Basin extractions, including the City's use of 23,048 acre-feet per year, will be approximately 114,955 acre-feet per year, or more than 50,000 acre-feet per year lower than estimated in the 2010 UWMP."

It is reasonable to assume that the projections in the urban water management plans for the individual water service providers (i.e., 114,955 acre-feet per year) will be more accurate than the projections that merely were estimated for those water service providers in the 2010 UWMP (i.e., 166,400 acre-feet per year).

A11.14 *The commenter states measures should be incorporated to minimize the cumulative water demand (e.g., provisions for recycled water, enhanced requirements for water saving devices within new structures, and enhanced limitations to landscaping). Santa Clara City Code 13.15.160 states "[i]t is the purpose and intent of the City Council to prohibit the use of potable water for landscape irrigation where recycled water is made available and meets all applicable standards. It is also the purpose and intent of the City Council to require the use of recycled water for all other nonpotable uses where recycled water is made available, meets all applicable standards for those uses and is determined to be suitable and economically feasible therefor."*

While the City supports water efficient development and the use of recycled water, the WSA is not the place where these provisions are enacted or enforced. A WSA is a factual document, the purpose of which is to determine whether sufficient water supplies are available for a proposed project. The enactment and enforcement of water conservation and recycling efforts are separate efforts, which may be implemented by, among other things, City-wide mandates or (if sufficient legal justification exists) project-specific mitigation measures or other conditions of approval.

A11.15 *The commenter suggests that although water demand within the County decreased during the economic decline, it is not proof that previous water demands were overestimated. While 2010 water use data was used to highlight the discrepancy between conservative water demand projections and actual water demands, as discussed on page 13 of the WSA (Appendix 3.14 of the Draft EIR), the WSA does not just rely upon 2010 water use data in its conclusion that previous UWMP water demands are conservative. Table 10 on page 20 of the WSA includes water demand data through 2014, which continues to show substantially lower than projected water demands (albeit with a very minor demand increase in 2012 and 2013 compared to 2010 and 2011) even in a period of rapid economic growth.*

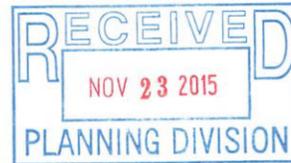
A11.16 *The commenter recommends the installation of dual plumbing and exclusive use of nonpotable water supplies for all outdoor irrigation purposes as a requirement of the Project, as well as using the requirements of the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance as a design standard for the Project. The Project would include water reduction strategies. As described on page 2-21 of the Draft EIR, water for landscaping on the Project site would be irrigated by recycled water, and the*

plants would be drought tolerant. Recycled water could also be considered for use in water features, mechanical cooling systems, and toilet flushing. In addition, the Project, as all other developments in the City, is subject to the City's Rules and Regulations for Water Service and Use (13.15.080) which includes the requirements of the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

With respect to dual plumbing, Santa Clara City Code 13.15.160 (b) states that "[i]t is also the purpose and intent of the City Council to require the use of recycled water for all other nonpotable uses where recycled water is made available, meets all applicable standards for those uses and is determined to be suitable and economically feasible therefore." Therefore, the Project would be required to dual plumb for recycled water use if such plumbing is permissible by the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water, meets all other applicable standards for the intended uses, and is determined to be both suitable and economically feasible for the intended uses. These determinations will be made as part of the Project approval process.

Comment Letter A12a—Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Nuria Fernandez (letter dated November 23, 2015)

Letter A12a



November 23, 2015

Mr. Julio J. Fuentes, City Manager
 City of Santa Clara
 1500 Warburton Avenue
 Santa Clara, CA 95050

Subject: City Place Santa Clara Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Mr. Fuentes:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the City Place Santa Clara Project (Project). The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) extends our appreciation to the City of Santa Clara staff and consultants, and the Project Developer, Related Santa Clara, for their efforts in ongoing engagement and coordination with VTA throughout the last several months.

A12a.1

VTA supports the proposed land use intensification on this important City-owned site, strategically located on the regional transportation network near VTA’s Great America and Lick Mill Light Rail Stations and the ACE/Capitol Corridor Great America Station. VTA supports the Project objectives to transform the site into a transit-oriented, mixed-use “City Center” that encourages walking, bicycling, and transit use. The synergy of the Project with Levi’s Stadium and nearby development projects offers an extraordinary opportunity to leverage these combined investments to provide world-class transportation options to an emerging activity center that are accessible, seamless, safe, and efficient. However, for this area to fulfill that potential, it will be important for City Place to be designed in a way that supports and does not hamper the efficient operation of nearby transit services.

VTA has prepared a number of comments on the DEIR, which are included in the attached memorandum. VTA’s key areas of concern are summarized below.

A. Concern: Project Significant Impacts on Transit Travel Times

A12a.2

VTA Request: Fully mitigate the impact by implementing Transit Signal Pre-emption for VTA light rail vehicles along Tasman Drive, installing the supporting infrastructure, and committing resources to monitor and maintain traffic signals during the 15-year Project construction period to ensure Transit Signal Pre-emption is operating properly.

The DEIR discloses impacts to transit operations, specifically, increased travel times for light rail and buses due to increased traffic congestion. The DEIR states that there are no feasible mitigation measures to address this impact. However, VTA believes that a range of feasible mitigation measures exist to avoid the impact and should be implemented.

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In response to county-wide concerns regarding transit travel times, VTA has invested \$90 million in system-wide speed and reliability improvements over the past two years through the Light Rail Efficiency program. In spite of the existing Transit Signal Priority¹ historically provided along Tasman Drive, light rail speeds and on-time performance in the vicinity of the Project have significantly degraded for extended periods on both event days and non-event days due to problems with signal maintenance, resulting in loss of ridership. VTA emphasizes that it will be vital for the proposed Project to enhance, and not diminish, the speed and efficiency of nearby transit services.

VTA requests that the City require the Project Developer to implement the following Mitigation Measures (in order of priority):

1. Implement Transit Signal Pre-emption for light rail within the City of Santa Clara.

VTA requests that the City implement Transit Signal Pre-emption for VTA light rail vehicles along Tasman Drive (between Patrick Henry Drive and Lick Mill Boulevard) to avoid the impact of the anticipated light rail delay. The operating specifications would be established through a cooperative agreement between the City and VTA. VTA requests that the Project Developer fund the construction of the infrastructure needed for Transit Signal Pre-emption (such as gates and fencing). Implementing Transit Signal Pre-emption would demonstrate the Project's transit orientation by increasing preference for light rail vehicles, reinforce VTA and the City's shared goals to increase ridership, and reduce auto trips.

2. Commit resources to monitor and maintain traffic signals to ensure Transit Signal Pre-emption is operating properly.

VTA requests that the Project Developer commit resources toward monitoring and maintenance of the traffic signals along Tasman Drive within the City of Santa Clara during the 15-year Project construction period, to ensure that Transit Signal Pre-emption is operating properly. This would be comparable to VTA's arrangements with cities when VTA is implementing projects that may have an effect on city streets and traffic signals.

3. Construct an elevated pedestrian walkway across Tasman Drive at Centennial Boulevard.

VTA requests that the Project Developer construct an elevated pedestrian walkway across Tasman Drive at Centennial Boulevard as part of the Project. VTA's number one priority is the safety of the travelling public. A pedestrian overcrossing would ensure the safety of visitors to City Place as well as Levi's Stadium, and minimize delay to light rail vehicles.

Another mitigation option would be to grade separate VTA light rail through this corridor which would achieve the objectives of the three measures listed above.

¹ The existing Transit Signal Priority for light rail vehicles along Tasman Drive in the vicinity of the Project provides traffic signal management by modifying signal operations to better accommodate light rail vehicles (e.g. by extending green lights).

A12a.2
 Cont.

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B. Concern: Proposed new intersection/crossing of light rail at Tasman Dr. and Avenue C

VTA Request: Modify the proposed intersection to prohibit new crossing of light rail and preserve light rail safety, speed, and reliability.

A12a.3

The DEIR describes a Project roadway “variant” that would add a new signalized intersection at Tasman Drive and Avenue C to enable additional vehicular access into the Project site; however, the variant would also create a new crossing of VTA light rail tracks. VTA strongly opposes the introduction of a new signalized intersection at any time, due to safety concerns (limited sight distances for light rail vehicles) and the potential for exacerbated delay to light rail travel times. VTA believes a non-signalized intersection with only right-in, right-out movements would be an acceptable option allowing for added vehicular access while preserving light rail safety, speed, and reliability.

C. Concern: Freeway Impacts and Voluntary Contributions to Regional Improvements

VTA Request: Allocate at least \$60 million in contributions toward regional roadway system improvements that would lessen or offset these impacts.

A12a.4

The DEIR identifies that 246 freeway segments will be significantly impacted by Project-related congestion and states the Project Developer will provide a voluntary contribution toward Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) Express Lane projects and freeway ramp metering and operations as Mitigation Measure TRA-3.1. VTA commends the City for directing the Project Developer to support planned projects that would improve the operation of the regional transportation system. Based on a review of projects in the Valley Transportation Plan (VTP 2040) that would lessen or offset the identified freeway segment impacts and due to the large number of impacted freeway segments, VTA requests that the Project Developer allocate at least \$60 Million in contributions toward regional freeway improvement projects along SR 237, US 101, and two interchanges.

D. Concern: ACE/Capitol Corridor Great America Station integration with the Project

VTA Request: Require the construction of near-term Transit Center improvements, and the funding of a Station Master Plan, to integrate the Project with adjacent transit.

A12a.5

In recent months, the City, the Project Developer and VTA have discussed opportunities to improve the ACE/Capitol Corridor Great American Station along with the proposed development. The Project Developer has shared concepts for a near-term Transit Center at this location, which would provide improved bus/shuttle access, additional bus/shuttle bays, improved passenger waiting facilities and improved pedestrian/bicycle access. However, these concepts are not acknowledged in the DEIR. VTA requests that the City require the Project

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A12a.5
Cont.

Developer to construct the near-term Transit Center as part of Phase 1 of the Project. VTA also requests that the Project Developer fund a Station Master Plan, in coordination with the City, VTA, ACE and Capitol Corridor to advance the design of a future integrated, intermodal Great America Station that brings together ACE, Capitol Corridor, VTA light rail, buses, and public/private shuttles. These actions would demonstrate the Project's commitment to true transit orientation, enhance regional and local access to the site, and help create a convenient, accessible, and seamless transit connection between all transit modes and the new development.

E. Concern: Pedestrian Facilities / Access to Transit

VTA Request: Provide exceptional pedestrian accommodations on all Project roadways, and complete the Tasman Drive sidewalk leading to the Lick Mill Light Rail Station.

A12a.6

Given increased pedestrian volumes associated with the Project, VTA recommends that the City work with the Project Developer to provide exceptional pedestrian accommodations on all Project roadways, particularly on Tasman Drive, Great America Parkway and Lafayette Street. The DEIR identifies impacts to pedestrians along Tasman Drive due to the lack of a continuous sidewalk between the Project site and the VTA Lick Mill Light Rail Station on the north side of Tasman Drive. The DEIR states that mitigation measures for the impact cannot be guaranteed because the Project Developer does not control all the necessary property. VTA requests that the City include a requirement in the Development Agreement that the Project Developer close the Tasman Drive sidewalk gap, including securing the necessary easement east of the Tasman Drive overcrossing.

F. Concern: Multimodal Improvement Plan

VTA Request: Commit to prepare a Multimodal Improvement Plan to comprehensively address the impacts of the Project on the regional transportation system.

A12a.7

VTA requests that the City prepare an area-wide Multimodal Improvement Plan to address the Project's impacts on Congestion Management Program (CMP) transportation facilities, which serve the broader area and region. The California CMP statute requires Member Agencies to prepare Multimodal Improvement Plans for CMP facilities located within their jurisdictions that exceed, or are expected to exceed, the CMP traffic Level of Service (LOS) standard. The City Place DEIR discloses that the Project will cause numerous CMP facilities to exceed the CMP LOS standard, which triggers this requirement. The preparation of a Multimodal Improvement Plan can be an opportunity to implement multimodal (non-automotive) transportation improvements as offsetting measures, when mitigations to meet the LOS standard are either infeasible or undesirable. The Multimodal Improvement Plan contains a list of actions to help offset the vehicular LOS impacts, along with an implementation plan with specific responsibilities and a schedule. These offsetting measures can include improvements to transit,

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Cont.

bicycle, and/or pedestrian facilities, as well as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programs. VTA looks forward to working with the City of Santa Clara and the Project Developer to help advance this important Project. VTA encourages the City to work with our regional agencies to designate the Project area as a Priority Development Area (PDA), which would assist in leveraging grant funding opportunities for sustainable transportation solutions. Please do not hesitate to contact John Ristow, Director of Planning and Program Development, at (408) 321-5713 if you have any questions or to discuss how we can work together with you in this process.

Sincerely,



Nuria Fernandez
General Manager/CEO

cc: Debby Fernandez, Rajeev Batra, Kevin Riley, Ruth Shikada, City of Santa Clara
Mayor Jamie Matthews and Councilmember Teresa O'Neill, City of Santa Clara

Response to Comment Letter A12a—Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Nuria Fernandez (letter dated November 23, 2015)

A12a.1 *The commenter expresses general support for the Project.* This comment is related to public discourse on the merits of the Project and whether it is viewed as an asset to the City. However, this does not address the adequacy of the EIR analysis or the Project's compliance with CEQA. Accordingly, no further response is necessary.

A12a.2 *The commenter requests that the list of transit mitigation measures include:*

- *Transit signal pre-emption for light rail within the City of Santa Clara.*
- *Traffic signal monitoring to ensure transit signal pre-emption for the 15-year construction period.*
- *Construction of an elevated pedestrian walkway across Tasman Drive at Centennial Boulevard.*
- *Grade-separated Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) light rail through this corridor (as an option).*

Signal pre-emption is not recommended at this location given the adverse secondary impacts on emergency response vehicles, vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians that would result from signal pre-emption that would favor only light rail to the exclusion of these other modes and vehicles. Therefore, both the first and second bullet points above are not set forth as mitigation measures. Furthermore, the City of Santa Clara does monitor its signalized intersections and update signal timings when traffic patterns change; therefore, the City is committed to monitoring its signals during the construction process. As to the third bullet point, there is no nexus between pedestrian crossings currently occurring on stadium event days and the Project that would justify construction of an elevated pedestrian walkway. For larger stadium events, Tasman Drive is closed and pedestrians are under guided event control. With respect to the fourth bullet point above, grade separating light rail within Santa Clara has not been identified as an improvement in any plan. Such a change could create a barrier for bicycle and pedestrian activity and separate established neighborhoods. Further, this improvement would require additional analysis to determine feasibility, would require multiple funding sources to construct, and is well beyond the ability of any single development to fund.

A12a.3 *The commenter expresses concerns about the new signalized intersection on Tasman Drive east of Centennial Boulevard (Avenue C) under the site access variant because of its potential exacerbation on light rail delays.* A preliminary analysis of the Tasman Drive and Avenue C intersection with the restricted pedestrian crossing of Tasman Drive indicates that this new signalized intersection would cause small increases in light rail vehicle delay (an average of less than 5 seconds per train and a maximum of 15 to 20 seconds per train). The signalized intersection should be designed to meet design standards for automobiles and light rail vehicles, including sight distance.

A12a.4 *The commenter requests a voluntary contribution to regional transportation improvements of \$60 million.* The City of Santa Clara is supportive of the Project Developer making a voluntary contribution to VTA. The amount of the contribution will be determined using the process

discussed between the City of Santa Clara and VTA staff and will be based on a percentage of Project traffic added to the freeway segments with significant impacts.

A12a.5 *The commenter requests details about how the Great America station will be integrated into the Project site plan.* The Project would be integrated with existing Great America station operations by connecting Stars and Stripes Drive to the existing shuttle bus loading plaza. Stars and Stripes Drive would ramp up as it leaves the existing station curb frontage at a 5 percent slope to maintain accessibility for users of all abilities and mobility levels. With inclusion of the New Tasman Drive Intersection in Variant 2, the relocation of Stars and Stripes Drive and the extension of Avenue C would allow for an enhanced transit plaza with a new vehicle turnaround just beyond the northern end of the station; this would provide room for an additional six transit bus loading positions. Further enhancements to Great America station could be considered as part of the Station Area Master Plan that VTA has proposed. As the Project progresses through its future design stages, the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connecting the Project site to the station would be designed and approved by the City in accordance with the standards set forth in the Master Community Plan, which contains comprehensive design guidelines concerning connectivity. Station improvements could be included in the Deficiency Plan/Multimodal Improvement Plan (MIP), as discussed in Master Response 3.

A12a.6 *The commenter requests the Tasman Drive sidewalk gap over Lafayette Street be closed by the Project.* The Project would add a sidewalk on the north side of Tasman Drive between Centennial Boulevard and the Lafayette Street overcrossing. Constructing a sidewalk to close the remaining gap would be required as a Project mitigation measure. In response to this comment, the mitigation measure discussion from TRA-7.1 has been updated as follows (page 3.3-168):

MITIGATION MEASURES. Mitigation Measure TRA-7.1 is to add the missing sidewalk on the north side of Tasman Drive between the west side of the Lafayette Street overcrossing and Calle Del Sol. The sidewalk gap impact would ~~remain~~ **be less-than-significant and unavoidable until the gap is closed with mitigation.**

TRA-7.1 Sidewalk Gap Closure on Tasman Drive on the Lafayette Street overcrossing extending east to Calle Del Sol. The Project Developer shall construct a sidewalk on the north side of Tasman Drive on the Lafayette Street overcrossing and extending east to Calle Del Sol. ~~Constructing a sidewalk on the Lafayette Street overcrossing may require widening the bridge structure or cantilevering the sidewalk along the northern edge. However, these improvements may be physically infeasible.~~ The Project Developer **shall fully fund the construction of this sidewalk segment between the Project frontage on Tasman Drive does not control all of the Tasman East property, and, therefore, cannot be responsible for installing a sidewalk between the overcrossing and Calle Del Sol.**

A12a.7 *The commenter requests the City prepare a Multimodal Improvement Plan to address Project impacts on the Congestion Management Program (CMP) transportation facilities.* See the Deficiency Plan/Multimodal Improvement Plan Master Response (Master Response 3).

Comment Letter A12b—Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Melissa Cerezo and Robert Swierk (letter dated November 23, 2015)

Letter A12b

MEMORANDUM

TO: Debby Fernandez, Associate Planner
City of Santa Clara Planning Division

FROM: Melissa Cerezo and Robert Swierk
VTA Planning and Program Development Division

DATE: November 23, 2015

SUBJECT: City Place Santa Clara Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for City Place Santa Clara Project. We have a number of comments on the document, which are included below.

Project Location and Land Use/Transportation Integration

A12b.1

VTA supports policies and plans that target growth around the established cores, transportation corridors, and station areas in the County, as described in VTA's *Community Design & Transportation* (CDT) Program and CDT Manual. The CDT Program was developed through an extensive community outreach strategy in partnership with VTA Member Agencies, and has been endorsed by all 15 Santa Clara County cities and the County. Intensification of land uses in these areas can promote alternative transportation modes, and reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases. The proposed Project offers an unmatched opportunity to develop a live-work-play activity center for Santa Clara that embraces multimodal transportation options.

VTA encourages the City to work with our regional agencies, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), to designate the Project area as a Priority Development Area (PDA), which would assist in leveraging grant funding opportunities for sustainable transportation solutions.

Consistency with VTA Congestion Management Program

A12b.2

As noted in DEIR Section 3.3 - Regulatory Setting, VTA, as the Congestion Management Agency for Santa Clara County, establishes the *Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) Guidelines* which provide local jurisdictions with a uniform program for evaluating the transportation impacts of land use decisions on the designated Congestion Management Program (CMP) system. The DEIR states that "The 2009 VTA Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines are the basis of the transportation impact analysis for this Project" (DEIR p. 3.3-7). However, it appears that the City of Santa Clara did not prepare a consolidated TIA Report to meet CMP requirements, but rather spread the analysis throughout the body of the DEIR as well as several Appendices. The 2009 VTA TIA Guidelines state in several places that the Lead Agency is responsible for submitting a TIA Report (also referred to as a TIA) to VTA for review. For example, Item 4 in Section 3.1 states: "The Lead Agency is responsible for preparing and submitting the TIA Report that meets all the requirements included in these guidelines to VTA within the time frame outlined in Section 1.4..." (VTA TIA Guidelines, 2009, p. 15).

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A12b.2
Cont.

In order to demonstrate compliance with CMP requirements, VTA requests that the City provide a reference table that states where each item in the “Typical TIA Table of Contents” (VTA TIA Guidelines, 2009, p. 17) is located in the City Place DEIR and Appendices. This reference table should cover both the main chapters (e.g., Existing Conditions, Background Conditions) and the topics listed in bullet points in the “Typical TIA Table of Contents.”

A12b.3

Trip Generation and Trip Reduction Assumptions

Appendix 3.3-J of the DEIR notes that the trip generation estimates for Parcels 4 and 5 relied on the Fehr & Peers MXD+ trip generation tool, which takes into account development density, scale, design, accessibility, transit proximity, demographics and mix of uses. The use of MXD+ results in considerably lower trip generation estimates than the use of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual. Appendix 3.3-J also states that an additional peak hour trip reduction (from the MXD+ estimates) of five percent was applied for Parcel 2, portions of Parcel 4, and Parcel 5 to account for likely transit usage. VTA requests that the City clarify how the transit reduction was applied to the MXD+ estimates to avoid double-counting the reduction. In addition, VTA notes that per the VTA *TIA Guidelines*, “a development qualifies as being located near transit if the project entrance... and greatest density of the project are within approximately 2,000-foot walking distance of the specified transit facility” (VTA TIA Guidelines, 2009, p. 35). VTA notes that much of Parcel 2 is likely to be beyond 2,000-foot walking distance of either the ACE/Capitol Corridor Great America Station or the nearby light rail stations, due to the barriers presented the Union Pacific railroad tracks and the grade differences along Lafayette Street. This emphasizes the importance of improving pedestrian accommodations in the Project area (see related comments below).

A12b.4

Transportation Demand Management Program

VTA commends the City and Project Developer for proposing a TDM program including vehicle trip reduction targets, the formation of a Transportation Management Association (TMA), monitoring, reporting, and remedial action if the trip reduction target is not being met. VTA has the following recommendations regarding the TDM mitigation measure:

- The DEIR should specify that trip monitoring will be conducted by the City or a third party. The DEIR currently does not specify who will conduct the monitoring but only states that “The TMA will assist with the monitoring activities that will be conducted.”
- The City should clearly state in the EIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program the estimated trip generation with standard ITE trip generation rates; the trip generation with built-in TDM reductions included in the MXD+ Trip Generation estimates (but without the TDM mitigation measure); and the vehicle trip thresholds (with the TDM mitigation measure). For the office component the assumptions about employee density should be clearly stated. This will help ensure that the TDM mitigation measure is practical and enforceable over time.
- The DEIR states that the TDM reduction targets will be applied to create thresholds for each phase of development as City Place builds out (“Interim Phases,” p. 3.3-86). VTA recommends including a table in the DEIR specifying the TDM reduction targets for each phase of development.

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A12b.4
Cont.

- In addition to the overall vehicle trip thresholds for the development, VTA recommends that the City establish vehicle trip thresholds for each gateway into the Project and mode share targets, similar to the framework of the North Bayshore Precise Plan in the City of Mountain View.
- The DEIR notes that “No thresholds are established for retail uses because it is difficult to enforce trip reductions for retail customers.” However, VTA notes that the proposed build-out of the site with up to 1.7 million square feet of retail uses is likely to generate a large number of retail employees traveling to and from the site, in addition to retail customers. VTA recommends that the City set vehicle trip reduction targets for retail employees and apply TDM strategies similar to those identified for office uses.
- The description of TDM Measures and Strategies in the DEIR should include a reference to parking management strategies and incentives to reduce trips, such as shared parking, reduced parking ratios, unbundled parking, parking pricing, and parking cashout. This would improve Project consistency with City General Plan policies, such as 5.8.3-P9 (Require new development to incorporate reduced on-site parking... in order to encourage transit use and increase access to transit services) and 5.8.6-P4 (Encourage shared, consolidated, and/or reduced parking in mixed-use centers and within 0.25 mile of transit centers and stops.)
- VTA also recommends that the TDM program include providing transit fare incentives such as free or discounted transit passes, on a continuing basis.

A12b.5

Intersection Mitigation Measures and Secondary Impacts

The DEIR identifies several mitigation measures for intersections impacts that were not previously identified in another TIA or planning document, and that involve increases to automobile capacity and will likely require changes to Right-of-Way (Table 3.3-20):

- Great America Parkway/Tasman Drive (CMP)
- Agnew Road-De La Cruz Boulevard/Montague Expressway (CMP)
- Great America Parkway/SR 237 WB Ramps (CMP)
- Great America Parkway/SR 237 EB Ramps (CMP)
- Great America Parkway/Yerba Buena
- Great America Parkway/Old Mountain View-Alviso Rd
- Gold Street/Gold Street Connector
- Great America Parkway/Gold Street Connector

The secondary impact analysis of mitigation measures included in the DEIR (p. 3.3-241 to p. 3.3-244) did not include an analysis of secondary impacts on bicyclists and pedestrians.

However, the 2009 VTA *TIA Guidelines* require a TIA to “Disclose whether mitigations for traffic LOS would likely increase pedestrian or bicycle delay at intersections due to longer signal cycles, revised phasing, existing inadequate detection” (2009 TIA Guidelines, p. 46, Item 9) and disclose various effects of automobile mitigation measures on bicycling and walking (same page, Item 8). This analysis was not included in the secondary impact analysis in the DEIR.

VTA requests that the transportation analysis be amended to include the analysis of secondary impacts of all proposed intersection mitigation measures on bicycles and pedestrians. In the

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A12b.5
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event that the analysis finds that widening these intersections will degrade conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, VTA recommends that the City work with the Project Developer to identify offsetting multimodal improvements in lieu of auto capacity expansions at these locations. Other alternatives should be explored to reduce the length of pedestrian and bicycle crossings and reduce conflicts, such as bulb outs, special signal phasing or timings, or grade separations.

A12b.6

CMP Intersection Impacts and Multimodal Improvement Plan

The DEIR indicates that there are 18 CMP Intersections that would be impacted per CMP LOS standards and would remain Significant and Unavoidable Impacts after all feasible mitigation measures are applied. VTA requests that the City prepare an area-wide Multimodal Improvement Plan to address the Project's impacts on CMP transportation facilities, which serve the broader area and region. The California CMP statute requires Member Agencies to prepare Multimodal Improvement Plans for CMP facilities located within their jurisdictions that exceed, or are expected to exceed, the CMP traffic.

The preparation of a Multimodal Improvement Plan can be an opportunity to implement multimodal (non-automotive) transportation improvements as offsetting measures, when mitigations to meet the LOS standard are either infeasible or undesirable. The Multimodal Improvement Plan contains a list of actions to help offset the vehicular LOS impacts, and an implementation plan with specific responsibilities and a schedule. These off-setting improvements can include improvements to transit, bicycle, and/or pedestrian facilities, as well as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programs. VTA can assist the City in identifying off-setting improvements and would be happy to discuss alternatives to physical improvements at CMP intersections in the City of Santa Clara. For further information on Multimodal Improvement Plans (previously "Deficiency Plans"), please see VTA's Deficiency Plan Requirements located online at: <http://www.vta.org/cmp/technical-guidelines>.

A12b.7

Freeway Impacts and Voluntary Contributions to Regional Improvements

The DEIR identifies 246 freeway segment impacts and states the Project Developer will provide a voluntary contribution toward Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) Express Lane projects and freeway ramp metering as Mitigation Measure TRA-3.1. VTA commends the City for directing the Project Developer toward supporting planned projects that would improve the operation of the regional transportation system.

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A12b.7
 Cont.

Based on a review of projects in the Valley Transportation Plan (VTP 2040) that would lessen or off-set the identified freeway segment impacts and due to the large number of impacted freeway segments, VTA requests that the Project Developer allocate at least \$60 Million in contributions toward the following projects:

SR 237 Express Lanes Phase 2 Construction	\$18 million
US 101/SR 87 Two-Lane Exit Construction	\$ 2 million
US 101/SR85 Express Lanes Phase 3 Design SR 237	\$10 million
SR 237 Express Lanes Extension to US 101 (through Design)	\$ 5 million
SR 237/Great America/Lafayette Interchange Improvements (through Design)	\$14 million
Various Traffic Operations System and Ramp Metering (through Construction)	\$ 6 million
US 101/De La Cruz/Trimble Interchange Improvement Design	\$ 5 million

VTA also requests that the City include VTA staff in discussions regarding the amount and uses of the voluntary contributions.

In coordination with VTA and Caltrans, the City and Project Developer should consider evaluating other interchange types at SR 237/Great America Parkway-Lafayette Street interchange that would improve access to SR 237 and increase mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians.

A12b.8

ACE/Capitol Corridor Great America Station Integration with Project

In recent months, the City, the Project Developer and VTA have discussed opportunities to improve the ACE/Capitol Corridor Great American Station along with the proposed development. In a meeting held on October 6, 2015, the Project Developer described concepts for a “Transit Center” next to the Station, located in the general vicinity of Stars & Stripes Drive and Avenue C. VTA was provided with a concept diagram “Great America Station Area Plan” (see attached *Exhibit A*) which provide improved bus/shuttle access, additional bus/shuttle bays, improved passenger waiting facilities and improved pedestrian/bicycle access. However, these concepts are not acknowledged in the DEIR.

VTA requests that the City require the Project Developer to construct the near-term Transit Center as part of Phase 1 of the Project. VTA also requests that the Project Developer fund a Station Master Plan, in coordination with the City, VTA, ACE and Capitol Corridor to advance the design of a future integrated, intermodal Great America Station that brings together ACE, Capitol Corridor, VTA light rail, buses, and public/private shuttles. The actions would demonstrate the Project’s commitment to true transit orientation, enhance regional and local access to the site, and help create a convenient, accessible, and seamless transit connection between all transit modes and the new development. These improvements, which would be identified in the Development Agreement, could be included as part of the City’s Multimodal Improvement Plan.

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Transit – Existing Conditions and Plans – Light Rail

A12b.9

The DEIR states that VTA has no specific plans to increase bus and light rail service in the City Place area during commute hours (p. 3.3-31). This statement is incorrect and should be corrected in the EIR. VTA is in the process of developing a service plan for a direct light rail service between the Milpitas BART station (anticipated to open in fall 2017) and Mountain View, which would increase the frequency of trains along Tasman Drive near City Place. These service enhancements were first outlined in VTA’s Light Rail Systems Analysis (completed in May 2010) and are being refined and advanced in VTA’s current Light Rail Enhancements project. The EIR should assume two lines of service along Tasman going through Santa Clara. Both lines would operate with 15 minute frequencies during peak periods.

Transit – Existing Conditions and Plans - Bus and Shuttles

A12b.10

Several statements about existing bus and shuttle service in the DEIR are either out-of-date or incomplete, and should be corrected:

- ACE shuttles: The DEIR (p. 3.3-35) states that ACE operates eight shuttle routes from Great America Station. The EIR should note that three of these shuttles (the Grey, Red and Yellow shuttle routes) have two shuttles for each ACE trip, and the shuttle vendor also stages a supervisor shuttle during train arrival and departure times. Therefore a total of 12 shuttles are staged in the shuttle area for each ACE train trip.
- Local VTA Bus Routes: The VTA Line 57 now operates at 30 to 60 minute headways on Sundays, not 60 minutes as shown on page 3.3-32.
- VTA Service to Levi’s Stadium figure (p. 3.3-222): The EIR should reflect that VTA no longer operates Line 254 from Eastridge for Levi’s Stadium events.

Transit Operations - Impacts to Transit Travel Times

A12b.11

The DEIR discloses impacts to transit operations, specifically, increased travel times for light rail and buses due to increased traffic congestion. The DEIR states that there are no feasible mitigation measures to address this impact. However, VTA believes that a range of feasible mitigation measures exist to avoid the impact and should be implemented.

In response to county-wide concerns regarding transit travel times, VTA has invested \$90 million in system-wide speed and reliability improvements over the past two years through the Light Rail Efficiency program. In spite of the existing Transit Signal Priority¹ historically provided along Tasman Drive, light rail speeds and on-time performance in the vicinity of the Project have significantly degraded for extended periods on both event days and non-event days due to problems with signal maintenance, resulting in loss of ridership. VTA emphasizes that it will be vital for the proposed Project to enhance, and not diminish, the speed and efficiency of nearby transit services.

VTA requests that the City require the Project Developer to implement the following Mitigation Measures (in order of priority):

¹ The existing Transit Signal Priority for light rail vehicles along Tasman Drive in the vicinity of the Project provides traffic signal management by modifying signal operations to better accommodate light rail vehicles (e.g. by extending green lights).

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1. Implement Transit Signal Pre-emption for light rail within the City of Santa Clara.

VTA requests that the City implement Transit Signal Pre-emption for VTA light rail vehicles along Tasman Drive (between Patrick Henry Drive and Lick Mill Boulevard) to avoid the impact of the anticipated light rail delay. The operating specifications would be established through a cooperative agreement between the City and VTA. VTA requests that the Project Developer fund the construction of the infrastructure needed for Transit Signal Pre-emption (such as gates and fencing). Implementing Transit Signal Pre-emption would demonstrate the Project's transit orientation by increasing preference for light rail vehicles, reinforce VTA and the City's shared goals to increase ridership, and reduce auto trips.

2. Commit resources to monitor and maintain traffic signals to ensure Transit Signal Pre-emption is operating properly.

VTA requests that the Project Developer commit resources toward monitoring and maintenance of the traffic signals along Tasman Drive within the City of Santa Clara during the 15-year Project construction period, to ensure that Transit Signal Pre-emption is operating properly. This would be comparable to VTA's arrangements with cities when VTA is implementing projects that may have an effect on city streets and traffic signals.

3. Construct an elevated pedestrian walkway across Tasman Drive at Centennial Boulevard.

VTA requests that the Project Developer construct an elevated pedestrian walkway across Tasman Drive at Centennial Boulevard as part of the Project. VTA's number one priority is the safety of the travelling public. A pedestrian overcrossing would ensure the safety of visitors to City Place as well as Levi's Stadium, and minimize delay to light rail vehicles.

Another mitigation option would be to grade separate VTA light rail through this corridor which would achieve the objectives of the three measures listed above.

The measures to address the significant impact on transit travel times should be identified clearly in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) in the Final EIR. The MMRP should clearly identify the responsible party, timing and source of funding for each measure.

VTA believes that a commitment to fund the maintenance and monitoring of signal operations and Transit Signal Pre-emption during the 15-year Project construction period is vital, based on our past experience with unforeseen changes to traffic signal coordination or transit signal priority which have harmed light rail operations. There are established precedents for including a monitoring requirement as part of a mitigation measure in an EIR; for instance, in the 2011 Final Second Supplemental EIR for the BART Silicon Valley Phase 1 Berryessa Extension project (in Mitigation Measure NV-3), VTA as the Lead Agency committed to conduct noise testing during the project startup phase, to inform the need for additional noise mitigation if required.

A12b.11
 Cont.

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Transit Operations – Proposed New Intersection/crossing of light rail at Tasman Drive and Avenue C

A12b.12

The DEIR describes a Project roadway “variant” which would add a new signalized intersection at Tasman Drive and Avenue C to enable additional vehicular access into the Project site; however, the Project variant would also create a new crossing of VTA light rail tracks. VTA strongly opposes the new signalized intersection due to safety concerns (limited sight distances for light rail vehicles) and the potential for exacerbated delay to light rail travel times. VTA believes a non-signalized intersection (e.g. right-in, right-out) would be an acceptable option allowing for added vehicular access while preserving light rail safety, speed, and reliability. In addition, VTA notes that any new crossing of the light rail tracks would need approval by VTA and the CPUC. Therefore both of these agencies should be added to the list of “Approvals by Responsible Agencies” required prior to development of the Project, listed on pages 2-36 to 2-37 of the DEIR.

A12b.13

Transit Operations – Proposed Bus and Shuttle Service

A12b.14

Appendix 3.3-I of the DEIR contains a Conceptual Bus Circulation Diagram illustrating potential internal circulation and VTA/ACE shuttle bus stops and routes. VTA recommends that the City require the Project Developer to work with VTA and ACE to determine the appropriate future bus stops and routes. VTA requests that the Project Developer include enhanced bus and shuttle stops throughout the Project site as part of the Project. With regard to the design of future bus stops within the Project area, VTA recommends using the standards specified in the VTA Transit Passenger Environment Plan to ensure that bus stops/shelters are designed to be safe, attractive and include amenities that encourage the use of transit. The Project Developer has stated that a shuttle will be provided through the Project site. VTA requests that the City require the Project Developer to provide or fund shuttle operations in perpetuity.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations – Existing Conditions and Plans

A12b.15

VTA has several comments regarding the documentation of existing conditions and plans in the DEIR:

- The assessment of pedestrian facilities in Existing Conditions only includes the presence/absence of sidewalks and crosswalks. VTA recommends also disclosing sidewalk widths and presence of continuous barriers such as street trees. Resources on pedestrian quality of service, such as the Highway Capacity Manual 2010 Pedestrian Level of Service methodology, indicate that such accommodations improve perceptions of comfort and safety on a roadway.
- VTA recommends showing access points to existing and proposed bicycle paths in Figure 2-9, Existing and Proposed Bicycle Network, and Figure 3.3-7, Existing Bicycle Facilities in the Focused Study Area.
- The description of VTA’s Complete Streets Program (p. 3.3-8) should note that VTA, in collaboration with the cities of Santa Clara, San Jose, Sunnyvale and Milpitas, will soon be starting a Complete Streets Corridor Study for the entire length of Tasman Drive that will develop conceptual designs for improvements for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit passengers.

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A12b.15
 Cont.

- The description of VTA’s Countywide Bicycle Plan (p. 3.3-8) should note that VTA is in the process of updating the plan, with an anticipated completion date of late 2017.
- The description of users of the San Francisco Bay Trail (p. 3.3-36) should acknowledge that the section of the trail near City Place is used by a considerable number of commuters. Recent surveys on the nearby Guadalupe River Trail show that roughly 50% of trail users are commuters.

Pedestrian Facilities / Access to Transit

Given increased pedestrian volumes associated with the Project, VTA recommends that the City work with the Project Developer to provide exceptional pedestrian accommodations on all Project roadways, particularly on arterial roadways such as Tasman Drive, Great America Parkway and Lafayette Street.

VTA’s Pedestrian Technical Guidelines (PTG), part of the implementation framework of the VTA Community Design and Transportation (CDT) Program, provide recommended typologies for various street types. For Community Streets (Arterials), the PTG recommends a minimum total width of the pedestrian realm of 15 feet to account for wide sidewalks, a buffer strip between pedestrians and automobiles with landscaping elements such as closely planted trees, shrubs, or light posts, and appropriate transition zones between the street, pedestrians and buildings (see attached *Exhibit B*). As noted above, resources on pedestrian quality of service indicate that such accommodations improve pedestrian perceptions of comfort and safety on a roadway. VTA recommends that the City require the Project Developer to provide sidewalks consistent with VTA PTG recommendations on the Project’s arterial road frontages.

A12b.16

The DEIR identifies impacts to pedestrians along Tasman Drive due to the lack of a continuous sidewalk between the Project site and the VTA Lick Mill Light Rail Station on the north side of Tasman Drive. The DEIR states that mitigation measures for the impact cannot be guaranteed because the Project Developer does not control all the necessary property (page ES-21). VTA requests that the City include a requirement in the Development Agreement that the Project Developer close the Tasman Drive sidewalk gap, including securing the necessary easement east of the Tasman Drive overcrossing.

During Levi’s Stadium event days, VTA has observed unsafe conditions where pedestrians are overflowing into the gutter pans/roadway shoulders and nearby landscaped buffer on Tasman Drive, because the existing sidewalk widths (5 feet) are inadequate. VTA believes that the proposed City Place Project will exacerbate this situation as it will generate additional pedestrians. The Project should provide wider sidewalks to address this issue, as noted above. VTA recommends including additional pedestrian mitigation measures, such as closing existing sidewalk gaps on other Project frontages such as Lafayette Street.

As noted in the “Transit Operations Impacts to Transit Travel Times” section of this letter, a pedestrian overcrossing of Tasman Drive between City Place and Levi’s Stadium would improve

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A12b.16
Cont.

safety by reducing conflicts between pedestrians, light rail trains, and other vehicles at the intersection of Tasman Drive and Centennial Boulevard.

A12b.17

Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations – Within Project Site

Figure 2-10, Existing and Proposed Pedestrian Network, shows a fairly connected network of sidewalks and pedestrian paseos within the Project site. However, there are some notable gaps in pedestrian connectivity which will lead to unnecessarily long and indirect walking routes to transit stations and trails. For example, there are missing connections between Avenue B and Avenue C, and between 3rd Street and the San Tomas Aquino Trail, due to the presence of large parking structures; public pathways should be provided to make these connections. Similarly, the proposed “urban interchange” of City Place Parkway and Lafayette, and on the 2nd Street crossing over Lafayette, will need exceptional accommodations (e.g., wide sidewalks, tree buffers, buffered bicycle lanes) to encourage pedestrians and bicyclists to overcome these barriers. Furthermore, several interior roadways have three and four-lane cross-sections. VTA recommend using two-lane cross sections whenever possible. This improves pedestrian and bicyclist safety by reducing speeds, reducing crossing widths, and reducing conflict points.

A12b.18

Slip Ramp from Tasman Drive to Stars & Stripes

As shown in the DEIR, the proposed slip ramp from eastbound Tasman Drive to the ACE/Capitol Corridor Great America Station would involve a narrow angle turn from Tasman Drive, rather than a squared-off turn; this is likely to encourage high-speed vehicular movements. While a sidewalk would be provided on the ramp it would likely be five feet wide with no buffer between pedestrians and cars; this would create an uninviting route for pedestrians accessing the station. The design of this slip ramp, as shown in the DEIR, may be inconsistent with City General Plan policies, including:

- General Plan Policy 5.8.2-P1: Require that new and retrofitted roadways implement “full-service street” standards, including minimal vehicular travel lane widths, pedestrian amenities, adequate sidewalks, street trees, bicycle facilities, transit facilities, lighting, and signage, where feasible.
- General Plan Policy 5.8.4-P13: Promote bicycle and pedestrian safety through “best practices” or design guidelines for sidewalks, bicycle facilities, landscape strips, and other buffers as well as crosswalk design and placement.

Close attention should be paid to the design of the slip ramp. VTA recommends modifying the ramp design to slow vehicular turns; reduce conflicts with bicyclists and pedestrians through special crossing treatments or grade separation; and provide a wide sidewalk, a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles, and a bicycle lane.

A12b.19

Vehicular Access and Connectivity

The Project proposes the construction of an extension of Lick Mill Boulevard north of Tasman Drive, connecting to Great America Way and Lafayette Street. The Project also proposes the addition of an “urban interchange” of City Place Parkway with Lafayette, and a new east-west overcrossing of Lafayette at 2nd Street. VTA supports these improvements, and recommends that the City condition the Project Developer to build these new roadway connections concurrently

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A12b.19
 Cont.

with Phases 1-3 of the development, rather than leaving these improvements to later phases. In addition, VTA recommends that the City and Project Developer explore other ways to improve east-west connectivity through the Project site and to take advantage of access from Lafayette Street. This would help distribute auto traffic accessing the development and minimize transit delay and auto congestion on Tasman Drive.

A12b.20

Construction Impacts and Roadway Design

The DEIR notes that construction traffic would result in short-term increases in traffic volumes and temporary road closures requiring detours for vehicles accessing the Great America ACE/Capitol Corridor Station (p. ES-24). Mitigation Measure TRA-18.1, Construction Management, states that prior to the issuance of each building permit, the Project Developer and construction contractor shall meet with the City's Public Works Department to develop acceptable detour routes for emergency vehicles and for shuttles to the Great America ACE/Capitol Corridor Station. VTA requests that the City modify the EIR text to note that VTA, ACE and Capitol Corridor shall be consulted prior to road closures or detours affecting the station. In addition, VTA requests that the City consult with VTA during the Transportation Design Review process for Parcels 1, 2 and 3 referenced on page ES-18 to ensure that access for public transit vehicles and shuttles as well as connectivity to the bicycle and pedestrian network is preserved and enhanced.

VTA requests that during any construction related to the City Place Project that construction or contractor vehicles be prohibited from using any part of the shuttle area on Stars & Stripes (which runs from the Tasman Drive overpass south to the cul-de-sac) between the hours of 6:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. and from 3:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. These are the operating windows for the ACE commuter trains at Great America Station. During those hours, it is very congested in that area with 25 shuttle vehicles, 250 passenger vehicles, and 1,600 pedestrians trying to access or leave the station. This request is based on the VTA/ACE experience during Levi's Stadium construction, when there were many occasions where construction trucks parked overnight on Stars & Stripes where the shuttles normally parked. Frequently construction trucks were entering or leaving the area during peak shuttle operating times which made things difficult as well as unsafe for shuttles and train passengers.

Exhibit A

VTA Comments on City Place Santa Clara Draft Environmental Impact Report 11-23-15

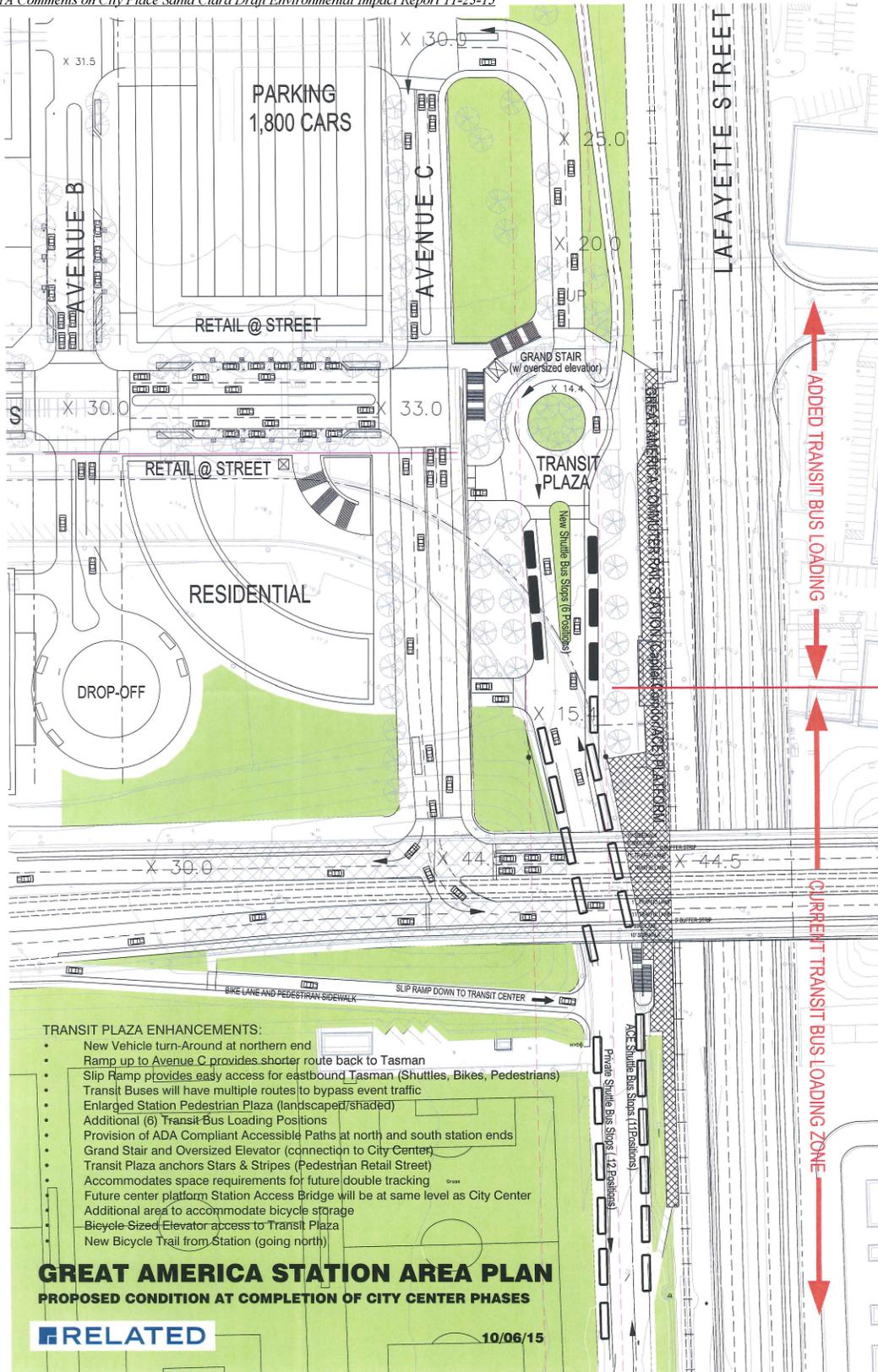


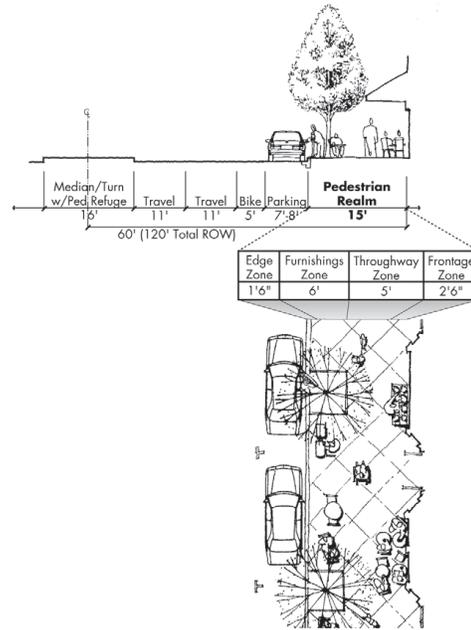
Exhibit B

VTA Comments on City Place Santa Clara Draft Environmental Impact Report 11-23-15

C. Corridor Street Types

Community Streets

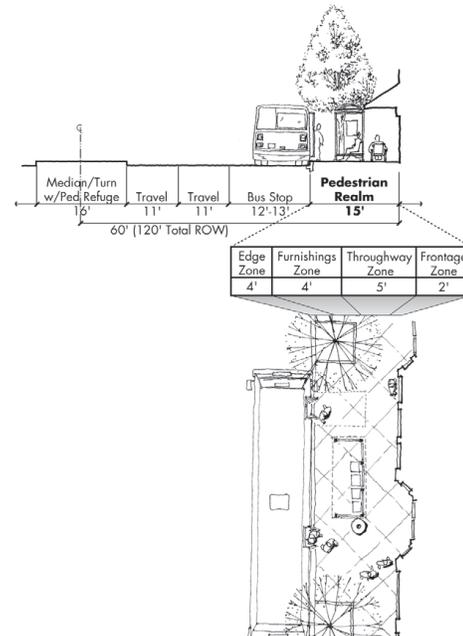
Community Streets are arterials that connect neighborhoods with major destinations such as downtowns, retail areas, and entertainment centers. They serve double-duty, both moving traffic and providing often-visited public space. Community Streets are generally 2 to 4 lanes and balance multi-modal functions, on-street parking, local access and a high level of street connectivity. The Community Street is potentially an important gathering place for the neighborhoods through which it runs and therefore requires a generous pedestrian realm to accommodate amenities. Medians providing pedestrian refuge are important on Community Streets due to the higher traffic speed and volume. The pedestrian realm should be increased proportionally to the speed of the traffic. The "Traffic Context Factor" (TCF) recommends a one foot increase in the pedestrian realm for every 5 mph increment increase over 30 mph.



Figures 2.23: Pedestrian Realm for Community Streets

Table 2.5: Community Streets

		Corridor Streets
		Community Street
Operational Characteristics	Volume (vehicles per day)	7000 - 15,000 +
	Typical Speed (mph)	25 - 40
	Adjacent Land Uses	Mixed Use or Residential
Design Parameters	Number of Lanes	3-4
	Overall R.O.W. Width	120' +
	Lane Width	11'
	On-street Parking	yes
	Pedestrian Realm Width	15' min + TCF



Figures 2.24: Pedestrian Realm for Community Streets (transit configuration)

Response to Comment Letter A12b—Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Melissa Cerezo and Robert Swierk (letter dated November 23, 2015)

- A12b.1 *The commenter encourages the City to work with regional agencies to designate the Project area as a Priority Development Area (PDA). City staff members will work with the City Council to consider adopting a resolution regarding applying to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to designate the Project site as a PDA. This process does not require certification of the EIR or change the conclusions presented in the EIR. Therefore, no further response is needed.*
- A12b.2 *To demonstrate compliance with the Congestion Management Program, the commenter requests a reference table that shows where each item in the typical Transportation Impact Analysis table of contents is located in the City Place Draft EIR and Appendices. A reference table that shows the related sections of a traffic impact analysis report and the associated sub-sections of the transportation section of the Draft EIR is provided at the end of this response (Table A12b-1).*
- A12b.3 *The commenter requests a discussion of how the transit reduction was applied to the vehicle trip estimates. The mixed use reduction methods used do not take into account high concentration of transit services. Therefore, a five percent reduction in external vehicle trips to account for transit use was applied to the land uses on the portions of the site that are within 0.5 mile of the Great America multimodal station, and the Great America and Lick Mill light rail stations. This reduction is based on a review of multiple sources, including mode share data from the American Community Survey and Bay Area Transportation Survey and a literature review. The reduction was applied to all of the uses on Parcel 2 consistent with the level of planning. The building locations on the site plan are only illustrative and are likely to be adjusted as that parcel is being designed for development.*
- A12b.4 *The commenter provides recommendations of the content of the Transportation Demand Management Plan, including the monitoring party, process to estimate trip generation thresholds, employee densities, phased targets, gateway targets, retail targets, parking management strategies, and transit fare incentives. Please refer to the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Master Response (Master Response 2).*
- A12b.5 *The commenter requests an analysis of secondary impacts on pedestrian and bicyclists due to the widening of intersections. An analysis of the secondary impacts on pedestrians and bicycles is provided in the Draft EIR on pages 3.3-241 through 3.3-243. As stated on page 3.3-241, improvements to the existing road rights-of-way (ROWs) could impact bicyclists and pedestrians during operation because the intersection improvements may increase the distance to cross the intersection and increase exposure to vehicle traffic. However, this is expected to be an incremental increase compared to existing conditions, and measures would be taken to ensure that bicycles and pedestrians have enough time to cross safely. This also applies to at-grade improvements requiring additional ROW, as explained on page 3.3-242. The freeway ramp and interchange improvements would not significantly affect bicycle and pedestrian facilities during operation because these facilities are typically not included on freeway ramps and interchanges. Because a secondary impact analysis for bicycles and pedestrians is provided in the Draft EIR, no further response is needed.*

- A12b.6 *The commenter requests the preparation of a Multimodal Improvement Plan. Please refer to the Deficiency Plan/Multimodal Improvement Plan Master Response (Master Response 3).*
- A12b.7 *The commenter requests a voluntary contribution to regional transportation improvements of \$60 million and includes a list of projects to which the funds could be allocated. Also, the comment suggests the City consider different interchange types at SR 237/Great America Parkway-Lafayette Street to improve access to the Project site. Please refer to Response A12a.4 regarding the voluntary contribution to regional transportation improvements. The Project mitigation measures identified physical improvements at the SR 237 and Great America Parkway interchange that would improve vehicle operations under the existing interchange configuration. While other interchange types could improve vehicle operations, they are more costly and may have limited benefit given the forecasted level of congestion on SR 237.*
- A12b.8 *The commenter requests that the City require the developer to construct the near-term transit center under Phase 1 of the Project. Please refer to Response A12a.5.*
- A12b.9 *The commenter requests an update to the Existing Conditions section to include the express light rail service being planned along the Tasman Drive corridor and a transit capacity analysis using two lines with 15 minute headways. The last paragraph on page 3.3-31 has been updated as follows:*

VTA has no specific plans to increase bus ~~and light rail~~ service in the City Place area during commute hours but does have a standard policy of improving frequency and extending operating hours when operating funds become available. The VTA is planning express light rail service along Tasman Drive corridor between the Mountain View and Alum Rock stations to expedite access to/from the BART station at Montague. To accommodate game-day ridership for Levi’s Stadium, VTA has planned several improvements to transit service, described in the Game-Day Analysis section.

The transit capacity analysis was based on existing light rail services. The addition of light rail vehicles would provide additional capacity that would benefit future light rail users of the Project. Therefore, no additional analysis is needed.

- A12b.10 *The commenter provides additional information about the ACE shuttle staging and updates to the transit service near the site. The changes provided by the commenter have been incorporated into the Draft EIR in the second full paragraph on page 3.3-31, as follows:*

Eight shuttle routes connect the ~~commuter~~ passenger rail station to major employers in Silicon Valley during commute hours. Three of these shuttle routes have two shuttle vehicles with each ACE train (the Gray, Red, and Yellow shuttle routes). These shuttle services are displayed in Figure 3.3-6.

Table 3.3-10 on page 3.3-32 of the Draft EIR, for Local VTA Bus Routes, Bus 57, has been revised as follows:

57	West Valley College	Great America Parkway	6:15 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.	30	30	8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	<u>30-60</u>	0.34
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In addition, the VTA Service to Levi's Stadium figure on page 3.3-222 of the Draft EIR has been updated so as not to show bus line 254. This figure is included in Chapter 5, *Revisions to the Draft EIR*.

A12b.11 *The comment expands on the list of feasible transit improvements to include:*

- *transit signal pre-emption for light rail within the City of Santa Clara, traffic signal monitoring for the 15 year construction period,*
- *construction of an elevated pedestrian walkway across Tasman Drive at Centennial Boulevard, and*
- *grade-separated VTA light rail through this corridor (as an option).*

Please refer to response to comment A12a.2.

A12b.12 *The commenter expresses concerns about the new signalized intersection on Tasman Drive east of Centennial Boulevard (Avenue C) under the site access variant in its safety implications and effects on light rail operations. Please refer to Response A12a.3.*

A12b.13 *The commenter requests that VTA and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) be added to the list of approvals. As noted by the commenter, and explained on page 2-18 of the Draft EIR, the Project would include New Tasman Drive Intersection Variant 1, which would create a new intersection that would cross the VTA light rail lines in the center of Tasman Drive. New Tasman Drive Intersection Variant 2 also proposes a new intersection that would cross the VTA light rail lines in the center of Tasman Drive. As the commenter states, any new crossing of the light rail tracks, as proposed by the Project, would require the approval of VTA and CPUC. Therefore, the following text has been added to the end of the list of approvals by Responsible Agencies on page 2-37 of the Draft EIR:*

- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority – approval of a new crossing of the VTA light rail tracks proposed with New Tasman Drive Intersection Variants 1 and 2.
- California Public Utilities Commission – approval of a new crossing of the VTA light rail tracks proposed with New Tasman Drive Intersection Variants 1 and 2.

A12b.14 *The commenter recommends that the City require the developer to work with the VTA and ACE to determine the appropriate bus stops and routes for future shuttles operating within the Project site and to provide funding for the shuttles in perpetuity. Providing easy access to bus and shuttles will be of importance to the Project's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan and to allow the Project to achieve its vehicle trip reduction goals. The City will work with the Project Developer during the planning and design of the on-site transit facilities; coordination with the VTA and ACE will be conducted as needed.*

A12b.15 *The commenter requests additional information about the sidewalk widths and conducting a quantitative multimodal analysis. The Project's bicycle and pedestrian impacts were addressed by evaluating the Project's effects on existing and planned facilities. The commenter's focus is on the quality of the pedestrian facilities. Please refer to Master Response regarding the development of a Deficiency Plan/Multimodal Improvement Plan (Master Response 3), which would include a review of the quality of the pedestrian and bicycle facilities and identify improvements as off-setting mitigation measures. Furthermore, the Master Community Plan*

for the Project site includes myriad goals and design standards to ensure usable, high quality, adequately-sized pedestrian facilities.

The commenter also requests an indication of access points to existing and planned bicycle paths on Figure-2-9 and Figure 3.3-7. Please see Figure 3.3-28, which shows the existing and future bicycle facilities on and near the site, including improvements to be provided by the Project.

The commenter suggests adding a reference to the Complete Streets Corridor Study to be completed along Tasman Drive and a note that the Countywide Bicycle Plan is being updated. In response to this comment, the following text has been added to the third and fifth bullets on page 3.3-8:

- **Complete Streets Program (ongoing):** VTA, in a collaborative effort with its member agencies and partner agencies, Caltrans, and the MTC, is in the process of developing a Complete Streets Program for Santa Clara County. The main objective of this program is to formulate a process for instituting incremental “complete street” improvements in Santa Clara County. The VTA, in collaboration with the cities of Santa Clara, San José, Sunnyvale, and Milpitas, will soon initiate a Complete Streets Corridor Study along Tasman Drive that will develop conceptual designs of improvements to accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, transit passengers and vehicles, and other vehicles.
- **Santa Clara Countywide Bicycle Plan:** The Santa Clara Countywide Bicycle Plan synthesizes other local and County plans into a comprehensive 20-year cross-County bicycle corridor network and expenditure plan. The long-range countywide transportation plan and the means by which projects compete for funding and prioritization are documented in Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2040. VTA adopted the Santa Clara Countywide Bicycle Plan in 2008, which includes a planned bicycle network with 16 routes of countywide or intercity significance. This plan is being updated, with an anticipated completion date of late 2017.

The commenter also requests that the commuter bicycle user type be noted in for the discussion about the San Francisco Bay trail. In response to this comment, the last paragraph on page 3.3-36 has been edited as follows:

East/west access for bicycles is limited. On-street lanes are present on Tasman Drive east of Lick Mill Boulevard, but they do not connect to the Project site. Off-street trails along SR 237 connect bicyclists to business districts in northern Sunnyvale and along North 1st Street in San José. These trails also provide access to the San Francisco Bay Trail, which is used primarily by recreational cyclists on the weekends and rather than commuter cyclists during the week. To the west of the site, on-street lanes along Old Mountain View-Alviso Road provide access from residential neighborhoods in northern Sunnyvale.

A12b.16 *The commenter recommends that the Project enhance the quality of the pedestrian accommodation on Tasman Drive, Great America Parkway, and Lafayette Street and closing sidewalk gaps along Tasman Drive. Please refer to Master Response regarding the development of a Deficiency Plan/Multimodal Improvement Plan (Master Response 3) and Responses A12a.6 and A12b.15.*

- A12b.17 *The commenter suggests improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle accommodations on the Project site. Pedestrian connectivity is planned throughout the Project site and would be incorporated into final street and paseo design configurations. Both bicycle and pedestrian accommodations would be made at both bridge crossings of Lafayette Street, but without incorporation of tree buffers. Collector and internal streets would be two lanes. Only corridor and campus perimeter streets would be four lanes, all as defined in the proposed Master Community Plan.*
- A12b.18 *The commenter notes that the slip ramp design should accommodate pedestrians and bicycles. The slip ramp from Tasman Drive to Stars and Stripes Drive would be designed to accommodate vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. A bicycle and pedestrian conflict zone is created at the point of divergence on Tasman Drive. This area would be designed to meet state of the practice standards regarding pedestrian crossing treatments and bicycle facilities.*
- A12b.19 *The comment requests that the urban interchange of the City Place Parkway and Lafayette Street be constructed concurrently with Phases 1–3 of the Project. The City shares the VTA's concern. The Master Community Plan and pertinent transactional documents will require the Project Developer to construct adequate site access roadway infrastructure concurrently with the development that demands such infrastructure.*
- A12b.20 *The comment requests that the VTA, ACE and Capitol Corridor be consulted prior to road closures or detours that would affect the Great America station. The commenter would also like to see construction or contractor vehicles prohibited from using any part of the shuttle area from 6:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Mitigation Measure TRA-18.1 requires that the Project Developer prepare a Construction Management Plan to minimize the effects of construction activities on the operations of the surrounding roadway system. Mitigation Measure TRA-18.1 has been revised on page 3.3-219 of the Draft EIR as follows:*

TRA-18.1: Construction Management. Prior to the issuance of each building permit, the Project Developer and construction contractor shall meet with the Public Works Department to determine traffic management strategies to reduce, to the maximum extent feasible, traffic congestion during construction of the Project and develop acceptable detour routes for emergency vehicles and for shuttles to the Great America ACE/Capitol Corridor station. The City will coordinate with appropriate transit agencies. The Project Developer shall prepare a Construction Management Plan for review and approval by the Public Works Department who shall share the plan with the Capitol Corridor Joint Power Authority, the VTA, and ACE for review and comment. The plan, which shall be implemented during construction, shall include at least the following items and requirements:

Table A12b-1. Typical Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) Table of Contents

VTA TIA Guidelines Requirement	Location in City Place Santa Clara Draft EIR
1. Executive Summary	
Executive Summary	Executive Summary (Pages ES-11 – ES-27, and ES-92 – 94)
2. Project Description and Setting	
Size and Location of Proposed Project	Executive Summary (Page ES-1)
Study Periods	(Pages 3.3-1 – 3.3-2)
Setting Roadways, Bikeways, Pedestrian Facilities	Street System (Pages 3.3-26 – 3.3-29) Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities (Pages 3.3-35 – 3.3-37)
3. Existing Conditions	
Roadway Network	Street System (Pages 3.3-26 – 3.3-29)
Existing Transit Service	Existing Transit Service (Pages 3.3-30 – 3.3-35)
Existing Bikeways and Pedestrian Facilities	Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities (Pages 3.3-35 – 3.3-37)
Existing Volumes and Lane Configurations	Existing Intersection Volumes (Pages 3.3-37 – 3.3-38) Existing Lane Geometries (Page 3.3-38) Figures (Appendix 3.3 D)
Level of Service Methodology	Traffic and Circulation Analysis Methods (Pages 3.3-21 – 3.3-25)
Existing Intersection Levels of Service	Existing Intersection Analysis (Pages 3.3-37 – 3.3-46)
Existing Freeway Segment Level of Service Observations	Existing Freeway Segment Analysis (Page 3.3-47 – 3.3-48) Existing Lane Geometries (Page 3.3-38)
4. Background Conditions (Existing + Approved Projects)	
Approved Development Projects	Land Use Changes (Page 3.3-47) Appendix 3.3 B – Approved and Pending Land Use Projects
Secured Roadway/Intersection Improvements	Transportation System Changes (Pages 3.3-47 – 3.3-48) Appendix 3.3 D – List of Transportation Improvements
Background Intersection Analysis & LOS	Background Conditions (Pages 3.3-48 – 3.3-55)
5. Project Conditions (Existing + Approved Projects + Project)	
Trip Generation, Distribution, and Assignment	Project Traffic Estimates (Page 3.3-61) Appendix 3.3 F – Travel Demand Model Validation Appendix 3.3 J – Trip Generation Estimates
Trip Reductions	Project Traffic Estimates (Page 3.3-61) Appendix 3.3 J – Trip Generation Estimates
Pass-by Trips and Diverted Link Trips	N/A

Table A12b-1. Typical Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) Table of Contents

VTA TIA Guidelines Requirement	Location in City Place Santa Clara Draft EIR
6. Project Impacts	
Intersection Analysis	Existing with-Project Conditions (Pages 3.3-62 – 3.3-73, 3.3-112 – 3.3-114) Background with-Project Conditions (Pages 3.3-74 – 3.3-84, 3.3-113 – 3.3-115) Existing with Project Phases 1, 2, and 3 (Pages 3.3-117 – 3.3-128) On-Site Intersection Analysis (Includes Variant Scheme Analysis) (Pages 3.3-142 – 3.3-156)
Queuing Analysis	Appendix 3.3-I – On-Site Street Analysis for Parcels 4 & 5 Appendix 3.3-N – Freeway Ramp Analysis
Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Facilities Analysis	Other Transportation Analysis (Pages 3.3-167 – 3.3-172)
Freeway Segment Analysis	Existing with-Project Freeway Segment Analysis (Pages 3.3-116 – 3.3-117) Existing with-Project Phases 1, 2 and 3 Freeway Segment Analysis (Pages 3.3-142 – 3.3-142)
Project Access, Parking, & Intermodal Circulation Analysis	On-Site Intersection Analysis (Pages 3.3-142 – 3.3-143) Parking Analysis (Pages 3.3-174 – 3.3-177) Appendix 3.3-I – On-Site Street Analysis for Parcels 4 & 5
7. Mitigation Measures	
Summary of Mitigation Measures	Project-Specific Mitigation Measures (Pages 3.3-85 – 3.3-177) Cumulative Mitigation Measures (Pages 3.3-191 – 3.3-215) Construction Mitigation Measures (Pages 3.3-219 – 3.3-220) Gameday Mitigation Measures (Pages 3.3-220 – 3.3-228)
8. Cumulative Conditions	
Near-Term Cumulative Conditions (Existing + Approved Projects + Project + Expected Growth)	Not applicable, City of Santa Clara used a 2040 Cumulative Condition.
Alternative Cumulative Conditions	Cumulative (2040) Conditions (Pages 3.3-177 – 3.3-192)
Source: Valley Transportation Authority. 2009. <i>Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines</i> .	