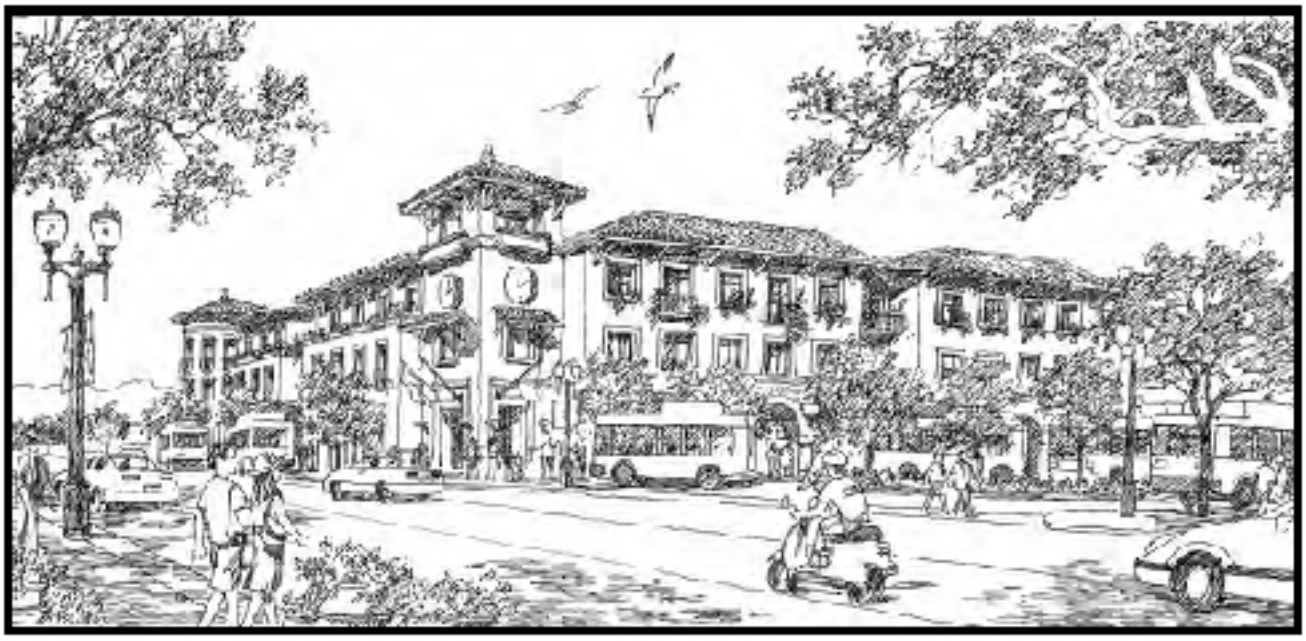
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING STRATEGY AND FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS



APPENDIX C
EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SANTA BARBARA TRANSIT FACILITY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Barbara Redevelopment Agency (RDA) and the Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) are considering the development of a mixed-use project on their adjacent parcels on Chapala Street between Carrillo and Figueroa Streets in downtown Santa Barbara. The RDA parcel currently has 160 parking spaces on it. The MTD site houses its downtown bus transfer facility that includes active bus bays, provides for limited bus layover and includes a cashier, information booth and waiting area. This facility is being used to accommodate a greater number of bus bays than originally anticipated and future growth of the route system will further impact the long term viability of this facility. The two agencies asked the consultant team as part of their scope of work to assess the feasibility of relocating the bus functions to another site or to expand the facility into the design of a new mixed-use project on the existing site.

This appendix evaluates the feasibility of four options for their potential as an MTD Regional Transit Center: three utilize existing sites either wholly or partially controlled by MTD and the City including:

1. The existing site on Chapala Street

2. The Amtrak Station site on lower State Street

3. The commuter parking lot site at Castillo and Carrillo Streets near the freeway.

Additionally, for the fourth option, the consultant revisited the City's previously completed Superstop study, which placed buses curbside throughout the Downtown.

Based upon the requirements of the Scope of Work, input from community members during several public meetings, and conversations with City staff and MTD staff, the consultant team developed the following goals for a new MTD Regional Transit Center. These include:

1. The new MTD Regional Transit Center should serve as a focal point for the MTD transit system as well as regional transit services and serve downtown Santa Barbara.

2. The new MTD Regional Transit Center should accommodate future growth of the transit system.

3. The new MTD Regional Transit Center should provide a convenient and comfortable place for bus riders to wait for buses and to obtain information on transit services.

2. EVALUATION FACTORS

Each potential site and/or approach for the MTD Regional Transit Center is rated on nine separate evaluation factors, which are described below:

1. *Operational Efficiency and Traffic Flow*

   Operational advantages and disadvantages of the site, including ability of buses to enter, exit and turn around on site; ease of ingress and egress for pedestrians and, if appropriate, other vehicles; internal flow and other similar factors. Also includes consideration of safety concerns and potential pedestrian/vehicular conflicts as well as potential impact of bus movements on other vehicles on site or on adjacent streets.

2. *Access, Proximity and Visibility*

   How well does site provide access to jobs, downtown retail areas and housing? Is the site easy to see and use? Is it close to the destinations of bus riders? Can the site serve as a focus for transit in the downtown area?

3. *Ability to Meet Future Transit Needs*

   Number of bus bays that can fit on site compared to estimated current and future needs, assuming vehicle size remains the same. MTD predicts it will need 16 bus bays at some time in the foreseeable future. These bus bays will serve local, express and regional bus services, including some operated by other agencies.

4. *Impact on Travel Times*

   To what extent will buses need to be rerouted to use a given site, and how will that impact travel times of riders and vehicles

5. *Regional Transit Connectivity*

   Ability for a site to accommodate regional connections on site or nearby, including regional bus, intercity bus and rail service.

6. *Passenger Amenities*

How well does the site accommodate attractive passenger amenities?

7. *Replacement Parking Feasibility*

If the bus terminal displaces passenger vehicle parking, can parking be replaced on site? If not on-site, can parking be replaced nearby?

8. *Additional On-site Development Opportunities*

What development opportunities can be accommodated on-site?

9. *Cost*

Overall cost for required improvements including costs associated with replacing parking displaced by new bus facilities.

3. SITE EVALUATIONS

3.a Existing Transit Center Alternatives

3.a.i *Existing Transit Center Alternatives – General Evaluation of Existing Conditions*

The existing transit center, built in the 1970s, originally had six bus bays arrayed around a circular driveway. As the need to provide for additional service grew, MTD began using both the outside and the inside areas of the loop to accommodate additional demand and buses. Some passengers, therefore, walk across a lane of bus traffic to reach the buses utilizing the outside of the loop. With regard to on-site facilities to serve the MTD and its patrons, the existing transit center has both indoor and outdoor waiting areas, provides for distribution of transit information and has a cashier to sell tickets, passes, etc. There is also a restroom for the drivers.

Nearly all of MTD's bus routes serve the existing downtown transit center. Many of the existing bus routes stop off-street within the transit center's circular loop. Others stop along Chapala Street in the vicinity of the transit center. Some regional services, such as the Clean Air Express, use bus stops located elsewhere in downtown Santa Barbara because there is not room to accommodate them in or adjacent to the existing transit center.

The public parking lot on RDA land adjacent to the transit center contains 160 parking spaces that are utilized by downtown patrons and visitors. Cars enter the lot from Figueroa Street and exit onto Chapala Street immediately to the south of the ingress to the transit center.

3.a.ii *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - Proposed Alternative Bus Configurations*

The feasibility study proposes two basic configurations for a new transit facility on the combined RDA and MTD sites. Both configurations assume that bus access is from and utilizes Chapala Street (see Appendix A for plan exhibits). The first configuration brings buses into the site. The second approach takes advantage of the width of Chapala Street between Castillo Street and Figueroa Street and provides a new bus way or transit mall parallel to this street. In both options, private vehicles seeking to park on site will enter and exit the parking area from Figueroa Street. Egress from parking could also be located on Chapala Street as exists. However, this opportunity should be further studied if the project proceeds to implementation as this option may create conflicts between bus and other vehicle movements and/or reduce the total number of bus bays that can be accommodated in a new transit facility on the existing site. Other options were looked at by the consultant but deemed to be either less efficient than the two that were developed in detail in the alternatives proposed or impacting on-site development opportunities to such an extent that they were infeasible within the context of the Consultant's approved scope of work.

The on-site transit center configuration typically accommodates eight off-street bus bays, plus another eight on-street bus bays located along the curb of Chapala Street. On street bus bays would utilize a sawtooth configuration allowing buses to pull in and out of bus stops efficiently. The on-street bus bays can be constructed in phases over time as needed. In all of the alternatives developed by the Consultant Team, the new MTD Regional Transit Center includes areas for bus drivers, passenger amenities, transit information and cashier functions. Assuming the new MTD Regional Transit Center is developed on the existing site, temporary accommodations for buses will be required during construction. The Consultant assumed, based upon conversations with MTD staff, that this could be accomplished on a temporary basis curbside throughout the Downtown.

3.a.iii *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Operational Efficiency and Traffic Flow*

As developed by the Consultant team, a new MTD Regional Transit Center, located on the site of the existing facility, will operate in a manner similar to the existing facility. No changes in MTD bus movements or routing will be required assuming the existing transit center is improved in situ. A new facility in the same location will also be built to contemporary engineering standards with regard to turning movements and bus designs utilized by MTD, and will be more efficient and safer with regard to bus, vehicle and pedestrian flows in comparison to the existing facility. A new on-site transit center as proposed by the Consultants will also have the capacity to accommodate regional transit services provided by other operators, if the operators choose to modify their routes and directly provide service to and from a new transit center located on Chapala Street. In general operational efficiency and traffic flow will either be equivalent to or better than current conditions assuming an improved transit center on the Chapala Street site.

3.a.iv *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Proximity to Existing Downtown, Access to Downtown and Visibility*

An improved downtown Santa Barbara transit center at the existing site will retain proximity to major Downtown traffic and trip generators. Assuming the scope of improvements proposed by this study, an upgraded facility would provide enhanced visibility for the transit center and present a more favorable focal point for transit in the downtown area. Furthermore, if the other regional transit operators move their services into a new MTD Transit Center, the new transit center will serve as a transfer point for all the region's transit services.

3.a.v *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluations of Ability of a to Meet Future Transit Needs*

A new transit center on the existing site, in combination with new curbside bus bay along Chapala Street between Carrillo Street and Anapamu Street should provide the 16 bus bays required by MTD.

3.a.vi *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Impact on Travel Times*

Since the bus movements to and from a new Transit Center located at the existing site will not change significantly, there will be no affect on most travel times.

3.a.vii *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Regional Transit Connectivity*

A new transit center located at the existing site will have room to accommodate all the regional bus carriers, so regional bus connections will become easier. If and when commuter rail comes to Santa Barbara, a shuttle can be established to connect the train station to popular destinations downtown including the new transit facility.

3.a.viii *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Passenger Amenities*

A new transit center located at the existing site, per the alternatives developed by the Consultant, will provide room for upgraded passenger amenities and can be equipped to handle technologically advanced features to make transferring as informed and as easy as possible.

3.a.ix *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Replacement Parking Feasibility*

All of the alternatives studied by the Consultant assumed that existing parking spaces that serve the downtown located on the RDA and MTD sites will be replaced on a 1:1 basis within

subterranean structured parking garages.

3.a.x *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Additional On-site Development Opportunities*

Each of the alternatives studied by the Consultant provide for on site development opportunities (see Appendix A).

3.a.xi *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Cost*

Each of the alternatives studied by the consultant will require monetary support to realize the transit component. These costs are estimated by the Consultant to range from $2.9 million to $7.4 million. On an alternative-by-alternative basis, this level of support for transit-related improvements needs be considered within the total scope of costs for each alternative developed by the Consultants (see Appendix B).

3.a.xii *Existing Transit Center Alternatives - General Evaluation of Other Considerations*

A temporary replacement facility will be required during construction of a new transit center at the site of the existing facility. MTD staff has stated that temporary curbside bus stops can be provided during a construction phase.

3b. Train Depot Alternative

3.b.i *Train Depot Alternative – General Evaluation of Existing Conditions at Site*

The existing train depot and Amtrak station sits on a triangular shaped property located between the railroad tracks and the 101 Freeway. The property is bounded by the railroad tracks, Montecito Street and State Street. The site includes an historic train depot, other buildings, a landmark Morton Bay Fig Tree and surrounding park, a bicycle shop and both short-term and long-term parking. Not all of the buildings in this area have transportation uses. Non-transportation facilities include the Reagan Ranch Center, a restaurant, a spa with patio and other buildings. The site can be accessed from either State Street or Montecito Street and is approximately nine blocks from the existing transit center located on Chapala Street.

The train depot site incorporates approximately 190 parking spaces in five separate areas, four of which are entered after taking a time-stamped ticket from a machine located at the main vehicular entrance to the site. Vehicles exiting from the site pass by staffed kiosks, where the tickets are checked and parking fees assessed when vehicles have exceeded a free parking allowance. At times taxis enter and wait for passengers at the curbside adjacent to the train depot.

3.b.ii *Train Depot Alternative – General Evaluation of Opportunity for Proposed Transit Facility*

By creating a new, bus-only entrance and exit on Montecito Street near the tracks, 12 bus bays could be distributed within the western portion of the train depot site (see Appendix A, Alternative Site 2). To accommodate these transit buses, approximately 72 parking spaces would need to be removed. Another 41 parking spaces could be created on the south side of the tracks on a lot between State Street and Kimberly Avenue. Assuming the new configuration, and assuming that structured parking would not be accommodated on this site, the total site would incorporate approximately 160 parking spaces, 30 spaces fewer than are now available. There is no site close to the station to accommodate additional replacement parking spaces.

Montecito Street is a two-way street with one travel lane and one parking lane in each direction. Parking is allowed on some stretches of the street but might need to be restricted near the proposed new entrance to allow for bus turning movements and good sight lines. Montecito Street does not intersect with State Street; it crosses over State Street. The lack of an intersection with State Street limits the routing options for buses accessing the transit depot site through the proposed new entrance/exit. This means buses would likely travel through the adjacent neighborhood to reach a major arterial and travel times for bus routes might increase.

3.b.iii *Train Depot Alternative - General Evaluation of Operational Efficiency and Traffic Flow*

The train depot site is severely constrained by the freeway and railroad tracks. Buses could enter from and exit onto State Street; there is a traffic light at that entrance. However, buses using the Montecito bus-only exit would not have easy access to State Street or the freeway.

Many streets near the train depot are narrow, and either the freeway or the tracks block some. Furthermore, these streets, including Montecito Street, are not designed to accommodate heavy bus use. The residents of these narrow streets may object to bus travel through their neighborhood. Also, circuitous routes through the neighborhood or longer routes using State Street could increase travel times.

3.b.iv *Train Depot Alternative - General Evaluation of Proximity to Existing Downtown, Access to Downtown and Visibility*

The train depot site lies outside the governmental and business center of downtown Santa Barbara. The Downtown Shuttle connects the station to Downtown but is slow. If the train depot site served as the MTD Regional Transit Center, riders would have lots of choices with regard to getting into Downtown proper, but most would still have to transfer to reach their Downtown destination, and some who may walk from the existing facility in Downtown to their final destination would perceive the walk to Downtown from the train station as inconvenient.

3.b.v *Train Depot Alternative - General Evaluation of Ability to Meet Future Transit Needs*

This site could only accommodate 12 bus bays, four fewer than expected to be needed in future years.

3.b.vi *Train Depot Alternative - General Evaluation of Impact on Travel Times*

Routing most bus lines into or through a bus facility at the train depot site would have an impact on bus and passenger travel times because of the distance of the train depot from Downtown proper combined with the roadway constraints in the vicinity of the station. Buses approaching from the east would be particularly constrained. Forcing buses to enter from State Street would put additional buses on an already busy stretch of that street.

3.b.vii *Train Depot Alternative - General Evaluation of Regional Transit Connectivity*

Having the area's major bus facility at the train station will enhance bus/rail connections.

3.b.viii *Train Depot Alternative - General Evaluation of Passenger Amenities*

The existing train depot could accommodate upgraded passenger amenities and technologically advanced features to make transferring as easy as possible.

3.b.ix *Train Depot Alternative - General Evaluation of Replacement Parking Feasibility*

Evaluation of the train depot sites indicates that absent structured parking, which has not been previously accommodated in this area, this site would not be able to replace about 30 of the existing parking places. While structured parking, either above or below grade could be theoretically accommodated on the site, inclusion of this type of parking would generally not increase the bus bay capacity of the site.

3.b.x *Train Depot Alternative – General Evaluation of Additional On-site Development Opportunities*

While the Consultant scope of work did not permit exploration of the train depot site beyond general feasibility for accommodation of a transit center at this location, existing surface parking lots could generally accommodate additional on-site development.

3.b.xi *Train Depot Alternative - General Evaluation of Cost*

Due to the limits of the Consultant scope of work, the general consensus amongst decision-makers that the Downtown site is the superior site to facilitate and expand existing bus routing, expand service levels for existing and future transit users and facilitate transfers for those users, the Consultant did not establish a cost framework for building a transit center at the Train Depot site.

3c. Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative

3.c.i *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Existing Conditions*

This site, at the corner of Carrillo and Castillo Streets, is three blocks from the existing transit center and four blocks from State Street. Currently, this lot houses parking for City employees. Located near the 101 Freeway with easy freeway access, the lot accommodates approximately 138 parking places. The parking lot is restricted to permit holders Monday through Friday between 6 am and 6 pm. At other times the lot is open for free public parking.

Vehicles may enter from or exit to either Carrillo or Castillo Streets. Castillo Street, which is one way southbound, has three vehicle lanes plus a bike lane. Traffic exiting the lot onto Carrillo Street must go west, toward the freeway. Traffic wishing to go east on Carrillo Street uses the Castillo Street exit and then turns left onto Carrillo Street.

MTD operates a peak hour shuttle between this lot and the employment areas of downtown. The route travels from the lot eastbound on Carrillo Street to Santa Barbara Street, then westbound on Figueroa Street to de la Vina and Carrillo Streets to return to the lot. The shuttle is open to all for a fare of $0.25 per ride but is free to those holding parking permit in this commuter parking lot.

3.c.ii *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Opportunity for Proposed Transit Facility*

A transit facility with 16 buses bays (see Appendix A, SK-0.30, Alternate Site 3) could be accommodated at the Carrillo and Castillo commuter parking lot. Buses would enter from either Carrillo Street or Castillo Street. Buses traveling westbound on Carrillo Street could turn right into the lot. Those going eastbound on Carrillo Street could turn left into the lot from a median turn lane, but that lane would not accommodate very many waiting buses. Buses could exit onto either Carrillo Street (westbound only) or Castillo Street (southbound only).

There is a traffic light at the intersection of Carrillo Street and Castillo Street. No parking is allowed on the western curb of Castillo between the lot entrance and Carrillo Street. On the other side of the street, there are four parking spaces. These spaces might need to be removed to allow for easier movement of the buses. Also, since bus movements cluster to enhance transferring, the

number of buses needing to turn left on Carrillo Street might back up along Castillo Street and could interfere with existing vehicular flows.

There are no nearby sites that could accommodate the parking spaces displaced by the bus facility. To accommodate automobile parking on-site, one level of underground parking could be constructed with access from Castillo Street. This level could hold up to 163 parking spaces, enough to replace the 138 exiting parking spaces and offer an additional 25 parking spaces.

3.c.iii *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Operational Efficiency and Traffic Flow*

The Castillo and Carrillo Street lot is close to the freeway with easy access to on and off ramps for each direction. However, the limited space for buses traveling eastbound turning left into the facility from Carrillo Street could be a constraint. Buses coming from the west that could not turn left into the lot would need to travel several extra blocks to get into position to enter the lot from Castillo Street. With many buses leaving the lot at the same time, traffic would back up along Castillo Street. This could increase travel time for bus routes as well as disrupt automobile traffic on Castillo Street.

3.c.iv *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Access, Proximity and Visibility*

The Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot lies several blocks from the main employment and shopping areas of downtown Santa Barbara. Although only three blocks from the existing transit center, commuter would typically walk further than currently required. However, if all the bus routes now serving the existing transit center were moved to the commuter parking lot site, buses coming from the east would probably pass through downtown before reaching the new MTD Regional Transit Center. Riders from the west destined for downtown could easily transfer to another bus route, which would deliver them close to their chosen location. However, some passengers would have an extra transfer and a longer trip.

Since the site is adjacent to but further removed from the major Downtown activity centers, it would not provide MTD with a downtown focal point for their services. Commuters on the freeway and on Carrillo Street would see the facility and be reminded of the MTD services. However, residents of and visitors to the most active parts of State Street and the downtown employment center might not pass by the Carrillo and Castillo Street site. Someone walking around downtown could not easily locate the main bus facility in relationship to other Downtown landmarks and facilities if it were located on this western edge of the Downtown.

3.c.v *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Ability to Meet Future Transit Needs*

The proposed facility for this site will accommodate 16 bus bays, enough to meet the expected and future need.

3.c.vi *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Impact on Travel Times*

Rerouting the existing bus lines to serve the commuter parking lot site would lengthen some routes and shorten others. Riders coming from the west into downtown would experience a delay with the stop at the new facility. Many riders now walking to destinations Downtown would need to transfer to another bus or take a longer walk.

3.c.vii *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - Regional Transit Connectivity*

The commuter parking lot site will accommodate the regional bus services, allowing easy transfers between regional and local services. Regional services utilizing the freeway will easily serve this site. For those passengers riding regional services and destined downtown, a transit facility at this location could entail an additional leg to each one-way trip, unless those services continued downtown after stopping at the facility. Regional rail connections would require a transfer to another route or a dedicated shuttle.

3.c.viii *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Passenger Amenities*

The commuter parking lot site has room for upgraded passenger amenities and could be equipped to handle technologically advanced features to make transferring as easy as possible.

3.c.ix *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Replacement Parking Feasibility*

Assuming a new bus transfer center at the commuter parking lot site, all existing parking plus about 30 additional spaces can be replaced in one underground level of parking. Underground parking will mean all parking spaces will be covered and protected from the weather. A bus facility on top will bring a certain level of activity during commuting hours and, perhaps, an enhanced sense of security for those parking in the lot even though it is underground.

3.c.x *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative - General Evaluation of Additional On-site Development Opportunities*

Additional on-site development could be realized on a platform over the bus facility. However, given the need to provide replacement parking underground and the additional expense per parking space associated with providing more than one underground level, this option was not actively considered by the Consultant Team.

3.c.xi *Carrillo and Castillo Streets Commuter Parking Lot Alternative – General Evaluation of Cost*

Due to the limits of the Consultant scope of work, the general consensus amongst decision-makers that the Downtown site is the superior site to facilitate and expand existing bus routing, expand service levels for existing and future transit users and facilitate transfers for those users, the Consultant did not establish a cost framework for building a transit center at the commuter parking lot site.

4. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR SANTA BARBARA TRANSIT FACILITY - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Use of the existing transit center located in Downtown Santa Barbara maintains existing bus routes, minimizes travel time for bus patrons to Downtown destinations and provides the most flexibility for maximizing the efficiency of transfers to and from the Downtown area. Revitalization of the existing transit center would also accommodate all regional transit services in one place close to most Downtown destinations.

2. The existing train depot site provides good access for a limited number of bus riders utilizing rail. Developing the full transfer facility at the depot increases transfer requirements for most bus patrons, increases commuter trip time to access Downtown for most bus users, and requires rerouting of many bus routes.

3. Use of the Carrillo Street and Castillo Street commuter parking lot site for a new transit center increases travel time to access Downtown for some bus users and requires re-routing of numerous bus routes.