

4.16 Visual Quality and Aesthetics

4.16.1 Introduction

This section describes the affected environment and environmental consequences related to visual quality and aesthetics from operations of the NEPA Alternatives. Information regarding visual quality and aesthetics in the City of San Jose and the City of Santa Clara was obtained from:

- *Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan* (City of San Jose 2011a).
- *Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan EIR* (City of San Jose 2011b).
- *City of Santa Clara 2010-2035 General Plan* (City of Santa Clara 2010a).
- *City of Santa Clara 2010-2035 General Plan EIR* (City of Santa Clara 2010b).

4.16.2 Environmental and Regulatory Setting

4.16.2.1 Environmental Setting

The BART Extension would be generally located in an urbanized portion of central San Jose and the southeast portion of Santa Clara, approximately 45 miles southeast of San Francisco and within the Santa Clara Valley. The Santa Clara Valley is bounded on the west by the Santa Cruz Mountains and on the east by the Diablo Range and runs south–southeast from the southern end of the San Francisco Bay. Visual quality, prominent features, and scenic resources within San Jose and Santa Clara are described below.

Visual Study Area

The visual study area for the BART Extension is the area visible from the alignment and from which the BART Extension features can be seen. The visual study area includes the alignment, which is relatively flat and extends approximately 6 miles from just east of U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101) and south of Mabury Road in San Jose to approximately the Santa Clara Caltrain Station. The visual study area also includes the available offsite views from within the alignment. Given that the majority of the BART Extension is underground and thus would not be visible, this analysis focuses on aboveground features. Viewer groups within the visual study area consist of existing residents; workers at office or industrial sites; and pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers using roadways in the vicinity of the aboveground features, namely station areas, parking structures, ventilation facilities, systems facility sites, and at-grade portions of the alignment.

City of San Jose

The visual study area for San Jose extends from Mabury Road to just north of Interstate (I-) 880. The surrounding land uses adjacent to the alignment from Mabury Road to Santa Clara

Street are characterized primarily by industrial uses, composed of large, boxed-shaped industrial buildings painted in neutral colors and associated surface parking lots. The alignment along Santa Clara Street from U.S. 101 to South 7th Street transitions to a mixture of low-rise industrial and commercial buildings, with intermittent single-family and multiple-unit housing on small lots. Santa Clara Street is lined with various types of mature trees with intermittent large, commercial billboards. West of South 7th Street, mid-rise commercial buildings and high-rise contemporary-style office buildings in the downtown San Jose area dominate the visual character. There are a few open-space areas along the alignment, including Roosevelt Park adjacent to Coyote Creek and the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens recreational area near the Diridon Station South and North Options.

Panoramic views of hillside areas, including the foothills of the Diablo Range, Silver Creek Hills, Santa Teresa Hills, and Santa Cruz Mountains, are key scenic features in the San Jose area. Intermittent views of the eastern foothills are available from Mabury Road and North 28th Street between Julian Street and Santa Clara Street, and there are also views of the Santa Cruz Mountains from Santa Clara Street at Cahill Street. There are no scenic byways or highways within the San Jose visual study area. Overall, the views are typical of an urban area, and no memorable views of natural features exist, with the exception of the distant hillsides.

In the vicinity of the Alum Rock/28th Street Station, the Five Wounds National Portuguese Church and School (Five Wounds Church), which is an ornate, sixteenth-century style church built in 1919, is located on Santa Clara Street west of U.S. 101 immediately adjacent to the Alum Rock/28th Street Station, and is considered a landmark and architectural resource by the San Jose general plan within the San Jose visual study area. The primary viewer groups would be workers in nearby industrial and commercial buildings; visitors of the Five Wounds Church; residents in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood west of 28th Street between Julian Street and Santa Clara Street; and motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists in the area, particularly those traveling along Santa Clara Street and 28th Street. Views primarily consist of industrial buildings and the visually prominent Five Wounds Church near 28th and Santa Clara Streets. The eastern foothills are located approximately 4 miles northeast of the study area and can be seen intermittently from 28th Street looking east.

In the vicinity of the 13th Street Ventilation Structure, there are primarily one- and two-story neutral colored commercial buildings and street trees, with distant views of large-scale buildings associated with downtown San Jose. Single-family residential homes are located north of the ventilation structure on either side of 13th Street within the Julian/St. James and Horace Mann neighborhoods.

In the vicinity of the Downtown Station options, the San Jose Downtown Historic District is located along Santa Clara Street between 4th Street and 1st Street and also contains several historic buildings listed in the City's Historic Resources Inventory (refer to Section 4.5, *Cultural Resources*, for details related to historic buildings in the area). These are located immediately adjacent to components of the BART Extension Alternative such as new station

portals, and are considered visual resources within the San Jose study area for the Downtown Station options. One- to two-story commercial uses transition to large-scale institutional and office buildings with tree-lined streets traveling west along Santa Clara Street toward downtown San Jose.

The historic Diridon Station is located immediately adjacent to the existing Diridon Station on Cahill Street. Near the existing Diridon Station, views are dominated by the visually prominent SAP Center, paved parking areas, transportation amenities, and light industrial uses. Intermittent views of the distant Santa Cruz Mountains are available from Santa Clara Street at Cahill Street looking south. The Santa Cruz Mountains are located over 8 miles south of the study area.

One-story neutral colored industrial uses are located on the Stockton Avenue Ventilation Structure site. Intermittent street trees line Stockton Avenue, and several overhead power lines are visible. Across Stockton Avenue to the west is the Garden Alameda neighborhood, which consists of mostly one- and two-story single-family residences.

City of Santa Clara

The City of Santa Clara visual study area extends from north of I-880 to the existing Santa Clara Caltrain Station and north of Benton Street. The study area is characterized primarily by industrial and commercial uses along the alignment. New single-family multi-story residences are located on the west side of the study area north of I-880, and have neutral coloring with 10- to 14-foot-high walls separating the residences from the existing Caltrain tracks. The industrial areas are dominated by large, neutral-colored buildings with parking lots surrounding the buildings containing sparse landscaping. The built-up, industrial landscape continues on the east side of the alignment. Small commercial, single-story strip malls, institutional buildings such as the Santa Clara Police Department, and the historic Santa Clara Caltrain Station are located near the northern terminus of the study area on the west side of the existing Caltrain tracks that traverse Santa Clara east to west in this location. Santa Clara University is located less than 0.25 mile southwest of the Santa Clara Caltrain Station across El Camino Real. Several trees are along the perimeter of the Santa Clara Caltrain Station and line the El Camino Real corridor. Elements of the historic Santa Clara Caltrain Station/Station Depot (historic Depot) are visual resources, which is located less than 0.10 mile west of the proposed Santa Clara Station platform.

The primary viewer groups are workers in nearby industrial and commercial buildings and passengers at the Santa Clara Caltrain Station; visitors and staff of the Santa Clara Police Department; and motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists in the area. Additional viewers include residents in the surrounding neighborhoods, north of Campbell Avenue and west of Newhall Street, and southwest of El Camino Real between De La Cruz Boulevard and Franklin Street. Views primarily consist of a mix of industrial uses, multi-story homes, strip mall-style commercial complexes, and the existing Santa Clara Caltrain Station. Intermittent views of the eastern foothills are available from El Camino Real and within the existing Santa Clara

Caltrain Station; however, there are no high quality views of any scenic vistas or mountain ranges within the study area.

4.16.2.2 Regulatory Setting

There are no federal laws that specifically define or protect visual resources; however, state and local regulations provide protection for scenic views and other visual resources. Most local jurisdictions have provisions for design review of all commercial, industrial, or public buildings, facilities, or other major infrastructure. Refer to Chapter 6, Section 6.14, *Visual Quality and Aesthetics*, for a description of relevant state and local regulations.

4.16.3 Methodology

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), impacts were assessed through evaluation of the degree to which the BART Extension would change the existing visual quality of the study area and consideration of viewer sensitivity. Analysis of visual effects under NEPA considers context for both the existing visual quality *category* of a viewed landscape (high, moderately high, moderate, moderately low, or low) and the viewer sensitivity (high, moderate, or low).

An *adverse effect* on visual quality and aesthetics would involve a negative change of two or more visual categories (e.g., from high to moderate) where viewer groups of high or moderate sensitivity would see it.

The method used to evaluate visual effects is based upon accepted visual analysis techniques, such as those employed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (1988). The FHWA approach provides both a framework and methodology for assessing the potential impacts associated with highway projects. These methods have been adapted to address the BART Extension and include systematic inventory of existing visual conditions, documentation of visual change, and evaluation of viewer response to change.

The evaluation of visual change considers several factors:

- The extent of visibility and the degree to which the various BART Extension elements would contrast with or be integrated into the existing urban landscape.
- The extent of change in the affected view's composition and character.
- The relative number and sensitivity of viewers.

Areas possessing sensitive viewer groups or offering scenic views were identified for the purpose of evaluating the visual effects of the BART Extension, and 10 important viewpoint locations were selected within the vicinity. Visual simulations were prepared using computer-generated information overlaid on the photo images of the selected viewpoints to show height and massing of the structural elements that would be seen from each viewpoint. Architectural features were included to make the features appear realistic; however, the simulations are not intended to represent the final design or architectural expression of the

BART Extension. Their purpose is to depict the general mass of key station elements as they relate to the surrounding areas. Architecture for the stations would be developed with the City partners and with community input and would be defined in subsequent design phases. Figure 4.16-1 shows the locations of 10 viewpoint locations.

4.16.4 Environmental Consequences and Mitigation Measures

This section identifies impacts within the visual study area and evaluates whether they would be adverse according to NEPA.

4.16.4.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative consists of the existing transit and roadway networks and planned and programmed improvements along the alignment (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1, *NEPA No Build Alternative*, for a list of these features). The No Build Alternative would likely result in visual effects typically associated with transit, highway, bicycle, and pedestrian, facilities, and roadway projects. These projects are not anticipated to adversely affect the visual character or scenic views in the area. Projects planned under the No Build Alternative would, however, undergo separate environmental review to determine whether the projects would result in adverse visual effects. Review would include an analysis of impacts and identification of mitigation measures to mitigate potential project impacts.

4.16.4.2 BART Extension Alternative

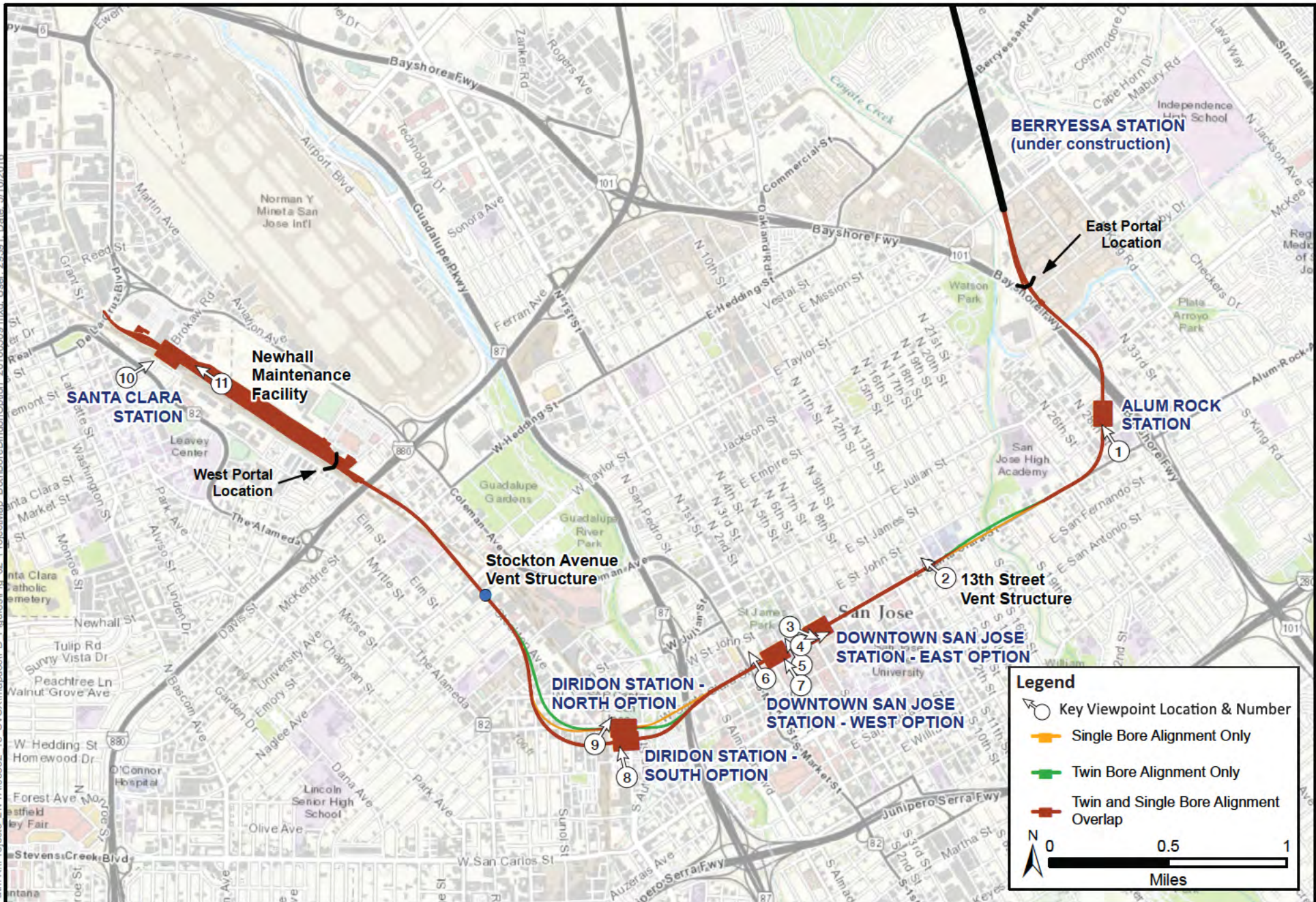
City of San Jose Visual Study Area

Connection to Phase I Berryessa Extension

The BART Extension would reconfigure the tail tracks south of Mabury Road in San Jose. Aboveground features in this area include a small portion of the tracks before they descend into a tunnel portal just north of Las Plumas Avenue, and an aboveground structure at the tunnel portal. Currently this area is occupied by an open, flat dirt lot and old railroad tracks. East of the site, land uses are predominantly industrial between Mabury Road and Coyote Creek. West and north of the site is mostly industrial, and the U.S. 101 corridor travels along the southwest side of the alignment.

The visual character in this area is defined by one- and two-story, neutral-toned industrial buildings, as well as vehicles traveling along U.S. 101. Single-family residential neighborhoods and street trees are located farther southeast beyond the immediate industrial landscape. Given that the majority of the surrounding visual landscape is dominated by industrial and transportation uses, the visual quality of this area is low. There are no high quality scenic views or vistas within this area.

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Source: Station and Track, VTA 2014; Basemap, ESRI 2015

Figure 4.16-1
Viewpoints Map for Visual Simulations
VTA's BART Silicon Valley-Phase II Extension Project

Existing lighting in the area is minimal as the majority of land uses are industrial. Streetlights are intermittently dispersed along the surrounding roadways, and additional lighting is provided by the industrial facilities in the area.

Viewers in this area primarily consist of motorists traveling on U.S. 101 and employees working at the industrial sites. Motorists and employees have low viewer sensitivity because motorist views are short in duration, and employees likely spend most of their time indoors focused on their work. Residents typically have moderate to high viewer sensitivity depending on the quality of view. At this location, the quality of views for residents is low, as the nearest residences are over 0.3 mile north of the aboveground features. Given the distance of the BART Extension features from sensitive viewers, and the existing surrounding industrial and transportation uses, moderate viewer sensitivity is assumed.

Lighting at the tunnel portal would be directed downward and would not spillover to any residences. The BART Extension would be consistent with the existing industrial and transportation uses in the vicinity of the site. The portal structure would be small and consistent with surrounding structures. The BART Extension would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site. Therefore, there would be *no adverse effects* on visual quality and aesthetics. No mitigation would be required.

Alum Rock/28th Street Station

The alignment would continue in a tunnel and transition into Alum Rock/28th Street Station just east of 28th Street and north of Santa Clara Street. Aboveground features would include up to a seven-story parking structure, which would be located in the west corner of the station area, as well as a small area of system facilities at the north corner of the parking structure. Industrial uses such as Monarch Truck Dealership, SCS Contractor Service, Mission Concrete, and Granite Counters are currently located onsite.

The surrounding visual character is characterized by industrial buildings, warehouses, and storage yards, immediately adjacent to the station site. Low- and medium-density residential uses are located across U.S. 101 to the north and east of the station site, as well as to the west of 28th Street and the existing out-of-service railroad tracks. The Portuguese Band and Social Center is located to the west of the station site, and the visually prominent Five Wounds Church and associated elementary school are to the southeast. Given the mix of industrial and residential uses, the visual quality of the area is considered moderate. Figure 4.16-1 shows the corner of Santa Clara Street and 28th Street looking north toward the historic Five Wounds Church, the Alum Rock/28th Street Station site, and associated parking structure.

Viewers in this area primarily consist of church attendees, store patrons, passing motorists, residents in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Given the predominately industrial character of the landscape, viewer sensitivity of these groups would be low to moderate.

Existing lighting in the immediate area consists of overhead street lights on the surrounding roadways, as well as some lighting associated with the existing industrial uses.

As shown on Figure 4.16-2, the parking structure would be visible to pedestrians and motorists on surrounding roadways, including Santa Clara and 28th streets. The multi-level parking structure would be taller than the surrounding one- to three-story industrial warehouses. A pedestrian connection along the south side of the station area at North 28th Street from Santa Clara Street would be designed as a pedestrian/bicycle/transit gateway into the station area with amenities such as street trees, wide sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian-scaled lighting. Station entrances and signage for the Alum Rock/28th Street Station would be slightly visible from Santa Clara Street at 28th Street (Figure 4.16-2).

The Five Wounds Church is a key visual resource in the area; however, the rest of the surrounding area has low visual quality. The BART Extension components would be of comparable height and mass to other buildings currently on and surrounding the site, and would improve the visual quality of the area by providing a community-oriented and pedestrian friendly streetscape.

The historic Five Wounds Church, at the southeast corner of Santa Clara Street and 28th Street, is just south of the Alum Rock/28th Street Station and is considered a City Landmark and architectural resource by the general plan. Because this station would be underground, the parking structure would be the only structure of notable height and mass added to the viewshed. The parking structure would likely partially disrupt existing views of the Five Wounds Church for anyone traveling southbound along North 28th Street as relatively uninterrupted views of the top half of the Five Wounds Church are visible from the roadway. However, these viewers do not currently have high sensitivity to changes in views and they do not have full views of the church under existing conditions. For pedestrians and motorists on Santa Clara Street and 28th Street, the area in the immediate vicinity of the church would not be dominated by the parking garage. The station entrances would be closer to the church structure, but are anticipated to be no more than one-story high. Furthermore, the parking structure would be set back at least 200 feet from the church building. The Five Wounds Church fronts Santa Clara Street, and the existing view available from the back of the church is dominated by the existing industrial uses. As a result, the BART Extension would not cause substantial visual degradation to the Five Wounds Church because it would not substantially block views of or from the church for viewers with high sensitivity relative to existing conditions. See Section 4.5, *Cultural Resources*, for further discussion of the effects of the BART Extension on the Five Wounds Church.



Existing view of Five Wounds Church (view to the northwest from the intersection of East Santa Clara Street and North 28th Street)



Alum Rock/28th Street Station - BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.
Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-2
Key Viewpoint 1: Alum Rock/28th Street Station Area – Santa Clara and North 28th Street
VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project

Nighttime lighting from the parking structure would be visible to the immediately surrounding areas, which consists of industrial uses, storage yards, parking areas, and the Five Wounds Church. Roosevelt Park is the closest residential neighborhood, approximately 500 feet west of 28th Street between Julian Street and Santa Clara Street, and is separated from the station area by a block of light industrial uses. It is unlikely that the lighting would be noticeable to residents in the surrounding neighborhoods due to the intervening industrial and commercial buildings between the residences and the new BART station and parking structure. The lighting would, however, be designed to focus on BART Extension facilities and minimize spillover of light and glare into adjacent areas. There are no sensitive viewers in the immediate vicinity that would be adversely affected by spillover lighting.

There are no identified scenic vistas in the vicinity of the station site. Additionally, the Alum Rock/28th Street Station area would incorporate design features such as street trees, wide sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian-scaled lighting, which would improve the visual quality of the area. With the incorporation of lighting design to minimize the spillover of light and glare into adjacent areas, no substantial effects would be expected. Therefore, the visual impact would be *no adverse effect*. No mitigation would be required.

13th Street Ventilation Structure

A ventilation structure would be located at the northwest corner of Santa Clara and 13th Streets and housed in one building approximately 12 feet high. Currently the site is occupied by a paved parking lot. One- and two-story commercial and commercial/industrial land uses are located adjacent to the site and dominate the visual character of the area. There are some street trees present, as well as overhead billboards and signage for the commercial uses. The visual quality in this area is low.

Viewers in this area would primarily consist of motorists and pedestrians traveling on Santa Clara Street and employees/visitors of the commercial establishments. The nearest residences are immediately north of the site along North 13th Street; however, views of the site are limited due to intervening trees. Given the land uses in the area and types of viewers, viewer sensitivity is low to moderate.

The ventilation structure would be consistent with the mass and scale of the surrounding one- and two-story commercial land uses, and would blend visually with the industrial/commercial character of the surrounding environment, as shown in Figure 4.16-3. Thus, the 13th Street Ventilation Structure would not substantially degrade visual quality in the area. Additionally there are no scenic vistas identified in this area, and no major sources of light or glare would be introduced. Therefore, the visual impact would be *no adverse effect*. No mitigation would be required.

Downtown San Jose Station

Downtown San Jose Station East Option

Aboveground components of the Downtown San Jose Station East Option include street-level portal station entrances, an emergency exhaust generator near the east end of the station, and one emergency ventilation structure, which would be approximately 12 feet high. The station portal entrance locations are being evaluated in sidewalks along Santa Clara Street and near 6th, 4th, and 3rd Streets (see Figures 4.16-4 through 4.16-6). The exhaust generator and ventilation structure would be in vacant areas, commercial parking lots, sidewalks, and landscaped areas along Santa Clara Street.

Heading west on Santa Clara Street from 5th Street, street trees line the sidewalks and views include large institutional and commercial buildings toward downtown San Jose. West of 4th Street, the density of buildings increases and the styles transition to an old town historic brick façade. Several street trees line both sides of Santa Clara Street, and businesses in this area include restaurants, bars, retailers, and a gas station. Given the more unified nature of the downtown district and the presence of street trees, the visual quality in this area is moderate to high. The primary viewer groups in this location are motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, restaurant and store patrons, workers, transit riders (bus and light rail), and San Jose State University students and staff. Given the visual appeal of this portion of the station site and types of visitors, viewer sensitivity is moderate to high.

Figure 4.16-4 depicts the view looking east down Santa Clara Street near its intersection with 4th Street and shows station portal entrances in the vicinity of City Hall. Figure 4.16-5 shows station portal entrances along Santa Clara Street from 4th Street looking east. As shown, station entrances and signage would be visible aboveground elements. However, the station entrances and signage would not dominate the visual character of the area over the existing business-oriented streetscape and density of the surrounding buildings. The design of the station entrances would be utilitarian and would not distract from the surrounding architecture, or disrupt the area's intact nature or unity. Ventilation structures would be enclosed, and the size and mass of the ventilation structures and station portals would be designed to be unified with the surrounding urban environment so they would not visibly conflict with the urban setting or substantially degrade the existing visual character of the surrounding area (see Figure 4.16-6). Furthermore, VTA will continue to encourage public input throughout the design process to further ensure the visual character is not adversely affected.

Light and glare from the station entrances would be minimal, and would be designed to reduce spillover of light, thereby minimizing any adverse effects of light and glare. Additionally, streetlights and lighting associated with the commercial and local bus and light rail facilities currently exist along the alignment; thus, lighting associated with the station entrances would be consistent with the surrounding lighting landscape, particularly with local transit facilities.



Existing View of vacant site near Coyote Creek (view to the northwest from the East Santa Clara Street and North 13th Street intersection)



13th Street Ventilation Structure - BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.

Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-3
Key Viewpoint 2: 13th Street Ventilation Structure
 VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project



Existing view of City Hall (view to the east from the intersection of East Santa Clara Street and North 4th Street)



Downtown San Jose East Station Option – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.

Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

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Figure 4.16-4
Key Viewpoint 3: Downtown San Jose East Station Option – City Hall Looking East
VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project



Existing view down East Santa Clara Street (view to the northeast near the intersection of East Santa Clara Street and 4th Street)



Downtown San Jose East Station Option – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.
Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-5
Key Viewpoint 4: Downtown San Jose East Station Option – Santa Clara and 4th Streets
VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project



Existing view down 3rd Street (view to the northwest at the intersection of East Santa Clara Street and 3rd Street)



Downtown San Jose East Station Option – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.
Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-6
Key Viewpoint 5: Downtown San Jose East Station Option – Santa Clara and 3rd Streets
VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project

The station portals and ventilation facilities would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista as no scenic vistas exist in the vicinity nor would the BART Extension components be of a size that could substantially block views.

Streetscape improvements would be provided along Santa Clara Street between 7th Street and 1st Street to create a pedestrian corridor connecting San Jose City Hall and San Jose State University with the Downtown Commercial District. Streetscape improvements would enhance the visual quality of the area for pedestrian and motorists and would be guided by San Jose's *Downtown Master Streetscape Plan*. See Section 4.5, *Cultural Resources*, for a discussion of the effects of this design change on historic architectural resources in the San Jose Downtown Commercial Historic District. Additionally, VTA operates light rail throughout downtown San Jose, including along portions of Santa Clara Street; thus, new aboveground BART components would be consistent with the existing transportation uses in the area. As such, the visual impact would be *no adverse effect*. No mitigation would be required.

Downtown San Jose Station West Option

Aboveground features associated with the Downtown San Jose Station West Option would be similar to those for the Downtown San Jose Station East Option. Several station entrance locations are being evaluated at 2nd Street and 3rd Street, Market Street, along Fountain Alley close to 2nd Street, and between mid-block buildings on 1st Street and Market Street (see Figures 4.16-7 and 4.16-8). An emergency exhaust generator would be located above grade near the northwest corner of Santa Clara Street and 4th Street. One emergency ventilation facility would be located at each end of the station with a ventilation structure aboveground adjacent to Santa Clara Street. The BART Extension components and existing visual character and quality of the area would be visually identical to that described for the Downtown San Jose Station East Option, with the exception that the mass and scale of buildings increases substantially around 1st Street and Market Street, and building density decreases. Viewer groups and viewer sensitivity for this portion of the alignment would be similar to those described for the Downtown San Jose Station East Option.

As described under the Downtown San Jose Station East Option, station entrances, ventilation structures, and signage would be visible aboveground elements. Figure 4.14-7 shows a station entrance/system facility site along Santa Clara Street near Lightson Alley. Figure 4.16-8 illustrates the view looking north along 2nd Street near station entrances on the east side of 2nd Street. Such BART Extension elements would be designed to maintain consistency with the mass and scale of the surrounding architecture and would not block any views as they would be smaller than the surrounding buildings in the area. Lighting at the station entrances would blend with the existing street lighting in the area and would have minimal effects. Such lighting would be designed to reduce spillover of light during the night, thereby minimizing any adverse effects of light and subsequent glare to adjacent buildings.



Existing view of Lightson Alley (view to the northeast from Santa Clara Street)



Downtown San Jose West Station Option – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.

Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

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Figure 4.16-7
Key Viewpoint 6: Downtown San Jose West Station Option – Santa Clara Street/Lightson Alley
 VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project



Existing view down 2nd Street near Fountain Alley (view to the northwest from 2nd Street)



Downtown San Jose West Station Option – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.

Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-8
Key Viewpoint 7: Downtown San Jose West Station Option – 2nd Street/Fountain Alley
 VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project

Streetscape improvements would be provided along Santa Clara Street between 4th Street and San Pedro and would be guided by San Jose's *Downtown Master Streetscape Plan*, improving the visual quality of the area for pedestrian and motorists. See Section 4.5, *Cultural Resources*, for a discussion of the effects of this design change on historic architectural resources in the San Jose Downtown Commercial Historic District. As such, the impact on visual quality and aesthetics would be *no adverse effect*. No mitigation would be required.

Diridon Station

Diridon Station South Option

The aboveground components at Diridon Station South Option are the same as under the Diridon Station North Option below; however, the locations of systems facilities would be located south and slightly east. System facilities would be the same for both the Twin-Bore and Single-Bore Options, and the alignments would be the same under the Diridon Station South Option. The systems facility site for a traction power substation (TPSS), auxiliary power substation, emergency generator, and ventilation structures would be located at the east end of the station between Autumn Street and Los Gatos Creek. The westernmost fresh air intake and tunnel ventilation shaft would be located just north of the existing Caltrain Station.

System facilities sites would also be approximately 12 feet high and surrounded by an approximately 9-foot-high concrete block (CMU) wall. This area currently contains paved parking lots and the existing Diridon Caltrain Station.

The visual character along Santa Clara Street in this area is dominated by street trees, the SAP Center building, which is large in mass and scale in comparison with the adjacent historic, large brick Diridon Station, and associated paved parking lots. Autumn Street is defined by low-density industrial-style buildings and few street trees; power lines dominate the sky in this area. Several mature street trees line both sides of Cahill Street and, given that no tall buildings are within this viewshed, views of the open sky and distant hillsides are available. The City has also constructed a green median to serve as a pedestrian linkage for transit riders from Cahill Street to Montgomery Street, along the south side of Stover Street. Given the mix of landscaping, distant views, large buildings, and transportation infrastructure, the visual quality is moderate in this area. The primary viewers are Caltrain train passengers, motorists, SAP event goers, residents, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The nearest residential units are multi-story condominiums approximately 0.10 mile west of the station area along Bush Street on the far side of the existing Caltrain tracks. It is likely that residents dwelling in top floor units immediately adjacent to the Caltrain tracks have views of the station area. Given the mix of transient and resident viewers in this area, viewer sensitivity is moderate.

Existing lighting onsite consists of street lights, lighting in the paved parking areas, Caltrain station lighting, and the more substantial lighting associated with the SAP Center, particularly during nighttime public events.

Station entrances and signage would be visible to pedestrians and motorists along Cahill Street, Montgomery Street, and Autumn Street under both the Diridon Station South and North Options, as shown on Figure 4.16-9a.¹ Under the Diridon Station North Option (below), station above-ground facilities would also be visible from Santa Clara and White Streets (see Figure 4.16-9b). The surrounding area is urbanized, and station entrances and signage would be small and designed to be consistent with the mass and scale of the surrounding urban setting and historic Diridon Station. As such, the station entrances would not substantially disrupt views of the existing historic station or of distant hillsides.

The system facilities would be enclosed, but visible to motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists traveling along Santa Clara Street between Los Gatos Creek and the existing Caltrain corridor. They may also be visible from the existing top-story condominiums located on Bush Street. The surrounding environment in this area is urbanized, and the system facility site would be located within an existing parking lot and shielded from public view by a 9-foot-high CMU wall if publicly visible. It would be designed in mass and scale to maintain consistency with the surrounding environment and would be visually consistent with the surrounding built environment.

There are no scenic vistas close to the station site. The visual changes caused by the aboveground station amenities and system facility sites would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area as they would be designed for consistency and unity with surrounding visual character (mass and scale) of the area. Furthermore, transportation amenities, including the San Jose Diridon Transit Center already exist onsite; thus, the addition of new station portals would not introduce substantial sources of new light or glare to the area. Therefore, the impact on visual quality and aesthetics would be *no adverse effect*. No mitigation would be required.

¹ The Diridon Station North Option would be visually similar to the Diridon Station South Option from Cahill Street; thus, there is no separate visual simulation for the Diridon Station North Option in this location.



Existing view of the Diridon Caltrain Station (view to the northwest from Cahill Street)



Diridon Station South Option – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.
Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-9a
Key Viewpoint 8: Diridon Station South Option – Looking Northwest
VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project



Existing view of the intersection of Santa Clara and White Street (looking northeast)



Diridon Station North Option – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.
Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-9b
Key Viewpoint 9: Diridon Station North Option – Looking Northeast
VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project

Diridon Station North Option

The aboveground components at the Diridon Station North Option include two station entrances, at-grade emergency exhaust ventilation hatches at each end of the station with ventilation shafts extending 12 feet above ground, and a systems facility site for a TPSS, auxiliary power substation, emergency generator, and ventilation structures at the east end of the station between Autumn Street and Montgomery Street. Under the Single-Bore Option, the westernmost fresh air intake and tunnel ventilation shaft would be located on the west side of the Caltrain tracks, adjacent to White Street. Under the Twin-Bore Option, these facilities would be located east and immediately adjacent to the existing Caltrain tracks. Refer to Figure 4.16-9b for a visual simulation of the above-ground systems facility.

System facilities sites would be approximately 12 feet high and surrounded by an approximately 9-foot-high CMU wall. This area currently contains paved parking lots and the existing Diridon Caltrain Station.

Continuation of Tunnel Alignment

On the east side of Stockton Avenue between Schiele Avenue and West Taylor Street, there are three alternate locations for a systems facility site that would house a tunnel ventilation facility, auxiliary power substation, and a gap breaker station. This system facilities site would be similar in size to that described for the 13th Street Ventilation Structure. The area is currently occupied by industrial uses and consists primarily of surface parking lots.

Heading north on Stockton Avenue from Schiele Avenue, several street trees and utility power lines are visible. Single-story industrial buildings are dispersed along the northeast side of Stockton Avenue, and mostly small, single-family residences are visible along the southwest side of Stockton Avenue. Approaching West Taylor Street, billboards and large towers associated with a concrete company are visible. Given the predominately industrial uses in this area, the visual quality is low to moderate.

Viewer groups in this area include residents, motorists, workers, and pedestrians and bicyclists. The nearest residents to the system facilities site are directly across Stockton Avenue; therefore, viewer sensitivity is moderate to high.

There are no scenic vistas in the vicinity. All three alternate ventilation structure locations would be in the existing industrial area. The surrounding area is urbanized, and the size and mass of the ventilation structure would be designed to be consistent and unified with the surrounding urban environment and would be screened from public view by a CMU wall. Thus, the ventilation structure would not substantially degrade the existing visual quality of the area. Furthermore, the visible structures would be screened from public view, and no substantial light or glare impacts would result. Therefore, the impact on visual quality and aesthetics would be *no adverse effect*. No mitigation would be required.

City of Santa Clara Visual Study Area

Newhall Maintenance Facility

The Newhall Maintenance Facility would be constructed on the former Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Newhall Yard. The Newhall Maintenance Facility would include maintenance and engineering offices and a yard control tower (up to three stories high). To provide for these functions, several buildings and numerous transfer and storage tracks would be constructed onsite. An onsite system facility would house a TPSS and other required facilities.

The visual character in the southwest quadrant adjacent to the Newhall Maintenance Facility site is dominated by modern style multi-story condominiums. Past Campbell Avenue in the northwest quadrant, El Camino Real is a six-lane street separated by a small, landscaped median. There are several street trees lining both sides of El Camino Real, and residential uses transition to large-scale, modern offices, and commercial uses line the north side of the street. Buildings of large mass and scale are also located along the south side of El Camino Real; however, they are set back, which provides an open visual environment. On the northeast side of the Newhall Maintenance Facility in the northeast quadrant, the visual character is defined by overhead power lines, and one- and two-story industrial and commercial buildings. The southeast quadrant is defined by the large Avaya Stadium and some light industrial uses. Viewer groups in this area include motorists, train passengers, residents, students, bicyclists, pedestrians, and workers. Viewer sensitivity along the southwest side of the Newhall Maintenance Facility site is moderate given the residential and commercial uses, and is low to the northeast given the dominance of industrial uses.

There are no scenic vistas in the vicinity of the Newhall Maintenance Facility. The Newhall Maintenance Facility would be designed to be consistent with the existing mass and scale of the surrounding areas. Additionally, the facilities would be located within the existing UPRR Newhall Yard and thus would blend with the existing visual character of the area. Therefore, the Newhall Maintenance Facility would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area. The yard control tower would be up to three stories tall and would be the most visible facility to offsite viewers. However, given the urban/industrial landscape in the area, no substantial adverse visual effects would be expected. Additionally, the only buildings that are directly adjacent to the Newhall Maintenance Facility are the multi-story condominiums, along the southwest side of the facilities. Given that these are shielded from the system facilities site by a large retaining wall, no substantial light or glare impacts are anticipated. Therefore, the impact on visual quality and aesthetics would be *no adverse effects*. No mitigation would be required.

Santa Clara Station

The Santa Clara Station would be at grade, centered at the west end of Brokaw Road, and would contain a boarding platform with a mezzanine level one level below grade. The

systems facility at the Santa Clara Station would be no more than 20 feet high. Figures 4.16-10 and 4.16-11 represent typical views of the Santa Clara Station area.

A parking structure with up to five levels would be located north of Brokaw Road and east of the Caltrain tracks and would accommodate approximately 500 BART park-and-ride parking spaces. The area was formerly occupied by a FedEx shipping and receiving facility but is currently vacant, and a large retail center is immediately adjacent to the northwest. Industrial buildings and Mineta San Jose International Airport are located to the north and northeast. The existing Caltrain tracks and station are located to the south. The parking structure would be constructed in a primarily industrial area, and the bulk and height of the structures would be similar to those of the existing industrial buildings.

Given that the uses currently onsite and immediately adjacent to the new station and parking structure are primarily commercial and industrial, visual quality in the area is low to moderate. Viewer groups in this area primarily consist of motorists, train passengers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and workers and visitors to the police station and the commercial/industrial areas. Given the transient nature of viewer groups, viewer sensitivity is low to moderate.

The BART station and new parking structure would be a dominant visual feature in this area. The surrounding area is developed with existing institutional and industrial uses, roadways, railroad right-of-way, and other transportation-related infrastructure. The addition of the station and parking structure would be visually compatible with the surrounding land uses, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area. The station would strengthen the railroad/transportation aesthetic of the immediate area. The BART station and associated components would create a denser urban aesthetic environment, and the facilities would not block any scenic views as none have been identified in the vicinity.

At night, lighting from the BART station and parking structure would be designed to maintain consistency with the existing Santa Clara Caltrain Station lighting and would help to create a safe environment. There are no light-sensitive land uses (i.e., residences) in the immediate vicinity of the new facilities, and design measures would be implemented to reduce spillover of light. Furthermore, the area already has existing lighting associated with the Santa Clara Police Station and streetlights along roadways and sidewalks. Therefore, the impact on visual quality and aesthetics would be *no adverse effect*. No mitigation would be required.



Existing view of the Santa Clara Caltrain Station (view to the northeast from El Camino Real)



Santa Clara Station – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.

Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-10
Key Viewpoint 10: Santa Clara Station – Benton Street and El Camino Real
VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project



Existing view of the Santa Clara Caltrain Station and Platform (view to the northwest from the Santa Clara Caltrain Station platform)



Santa Clara Station – BART Extension Alternative

Note: These are intended to be preliminary conceptual representations of the project. Final design and landscaping will be determined in coordination with local cities.
Source: Circlepoint, 2016.

Figure 4.16-11
Key Viewpoint 11: Santa Clara Station Platform
VTA's BART Silicon Valley–Phase II Extension Project

Tree Removal

As described in detail in Section 5.5.4, *Biological Resources and Wetlands*, construction would include removing street- and other trees to accommodate BART Extension features and clear construction staging areas. Existing tree species occur within or in the vicinity of the Alum Rock/28th Street, Downtown San Jose, Diridon, and Santa Clara Station areas are predominantly landscaping trees and would be removed during construction. As described in Mitigation Measure BIO-CNST-H (see Chapter 5, Section 5.5.4), tree removal would comply with the overall intent of local tree ordinances, and therefore replacement trees would be planted or in lieu fees paid to mitigate the effects. Therefore, there would be *no adverse effect*.

4.16.5 NEPA Conclusion

The BART Extension Alternative impact on aesthetics and visual quality would result in *no adverse effect*. Trees that would be removed due to construction activities would be inventoried and noted on construction plans before construction begins. Any trees that are removed will be compensated for according to local tree ordinances (refer to Mitigation Measure BIO-CNST-I); no additional mitigation would be required. VTA would continue to work with city, community, and business groups in developing a BART Extension Alternative that would be integrated into the surrounding streetscape.