

## January 10<sup>th</sup> Public Open House Notes

*Updated as of 1/17/18 - These notes will be updated with comments received on the Virtual Open House through the end of January.*

Following November's Public Workshop and a series of engagement and outreach efforts throughout December, the Re-Imagine Watt I/80 project team held a Public Open House on Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 - 7:30 pm at the North Highlands Community Center. Approximately 35 people attended, representing transit riders, North Highlands residents, business community representatives, transit advocates, American River College students, the law enforcement community, environmental groups, SacRT staff, and others.

The workshop followed an open-house style format with boards around the room showcasing four concepts, or options for public feedback: major station improvements, significant station improvements with a relocated bus stop, relocation to Roseville Road, and immediate low-cost improvements. These options were developed by the project team using input from stakeholders at the previous public workshop and walk audits. A presentation provided attendees with more information about how the options were developed and next steps in the planning process. The presentation and materials can be found online as part of a [Virtual Open House](#), providing those who were unable to attend an opportunity to share input.



### **Station Enhancements**

Through several iterations of public input, the project team developed three options for potential station enhancements at the Transit Center: major improvements, significant improvements with relocation of the northbound bus stop, and immediate, low-cost improvements. The major improvements option includes measures such as redesigned stairs and elevators on both sides of Watt Avenue, increased lighting at the Transit Center and along Watt Avenue, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements on Watt Avenue, and architectural and amenity enhancements including lighting, seating, and new plaza areas. The significant improvements option includes nearly all of the same measures as the major improvements option on the west side of the station. However, this option also proposes relocating the northbound bus stop on the east side of Watt Avenue approximately 500 ft. south in order to close off public access under the overpass. The immediate low-cost improvements option focuses on short-term safety and aesthetic improvements such as increased lighting, restricting access in certain areas, removing potential hiding spaces, and more regular maintenance. SacRT currently has some funding identified for these improvements and may implement some form of these changes regardless of the option(s) that the SacRT Board chooses. All options seek to enhance defensible space, add more lighting throughout the station, eliminate sharp corners, and address accessibility between the upper and lower levels.

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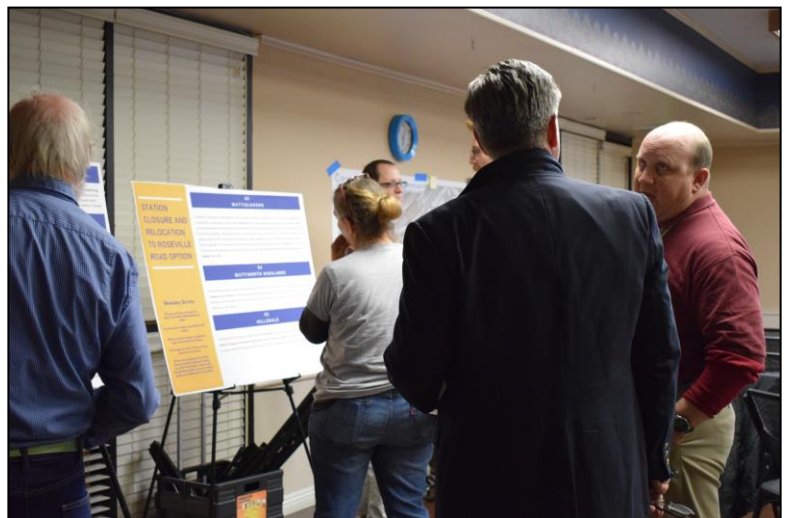


Participants were generally receptive to each of these options and showed interest in the scalability and phasing from low-cost improvements to significant and major improvements over time. Some preferred the significant improvements option because relocating the northbound bus stop would allow for the underpass area to be closed and improve overall safety. Others preferred the major improvements option due to an easier transfer between northbound buses and light rail and the thought that the major enhancements would address current safety issues under Watt Avenue.

Some participants expressed concerns that these improvements would not solve the persistent issues given the fact that Watt Avenue itself suffers from significant homelessness, crime, and other issues that are not specific only to the Transit Center. The timeline and costs for implementation of the significant or major improvements were also perceived as higher than those for the bus route relocation option. Participants requested a more detailed breakdown of costs per option. Overall, more than 60% of participants indicated a desire to maintain service at Watt/I-80 and invest in long-term improvements.

### **Bus Route Relocation to Roseville Road**

The bus route relocation option involves closing the Watt/I-80 Transit Center and rerouting bus service to the Roseville Road station where all transfers would then occur. New bus bays and pedestrian facilities would be constructed at the Roseville Road station in order to accommodate the relocated bus routes and improve traffic flow between all modes. Some parking would be removed in order to do so. SacRT staff also developed a route-by-route inventory of impacts to riders for each of the 7 bus routes currently serving the Watt/I-80 Transit Center. Similar to the Station Enhancements options, these graphics can be found online [here](#).





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Some participants preferred the option to close the Watt/I-80 Transit Center and relocate bus service to Roseville Road due to improved safety and ease of transfer in the short term as well as the lower price tag. However, other participants who ride daily, are transit-dependent, or do not currently ride but would like to in the future expressed strong opposition to this option. Transit-dependent riders stressed the importance of the Transit Center's current location on Watt Avenue and that rerouting service to Roseville Road would place an unbearable burden on commute times and travel costs. Approximately less than 40% of participants favored the relocation option over all others.

Next steps include hosting the diagrams and graphics from the Public Open House online for comment through the end of January and presenting this information to SacRT's Mobility Advisory Committee. Staff and the project team will take input on all of these options as well as feedback provided throughout the project period to develop the Master Plan as well as a staff recommendation to the Regional Transit Board of Directors. Staff is predicting that this project will be presented to the Board in March. The project team will make available the draft Master Plan and staff recommendation to the public in advance of the Board's decision.