

Inside the Station

A lack of capacity is one of the biggest issues facing Balboa Park Station at present. There are three specific issues related to capacity and moving about within the station:

Faregates. BART's standard is a maximum wait of one minute for passengers to pass through the faregates, even if one gate is out of service. This is roughly equivalent to a queue of 25 people. At present, passengers often have to wait for two minutes or more to exit at peak times.

Escalators and stairs. There are two sets of stairs and one escalator between the concourse and platform. The stairs closest to the faregates are particularly congested, and people descending to the platform conflict with those going up.

Emergency exits. BART's standard is that everyone should be able to exit the station to a point of safety in eight minutes or less in the event of an emergency. In addition, platforms must be able to be cleared in six minutes. While Balboa Park station meets this standard at present, growing ridership means it is unlikely to do so in the future. This is partly due to issues with the two emergency stairs at opposite ends of the platform – one is too steep to meet current standards, while the other can only be accessed through the train tunnel, and is confusingly signed (see photo).



Should a passenger follow the sign for the emergency stair, or obey the 'Danger: Electric Third Rail. Do not Enter' sign?

Outside the Station

Walking

Balboa Park can be a harsh environment for pedestrians, and not just because of the fog, wind and cold. The route from the station to City College, for example, taken by thousands of students and staff each day, involves walking along a narrow strip alongside the Muni streetcar tracks, crossing the freeway off-ramp without the benefit of any traffic signal or stop sign, crossing Ocean Avenue and entering City College via a parking lot and steep path. While there is an alternative pathway from Ocean Avenue round the station to the Geneva Avenue entrance, it is a circuitous route. Since few people use this path, it can also feel unsafe.

There are no signs anywhere in the neighborhood to help pedestrians get to and from the station, while the lack of shops or other active uses facing the street creates an unfriendly environment. The park, for example, is surrounded by an ugly, rusty chain link fence. The freeway, meanwhile, divides the neighborhood both physically and psychologically, and its noise and visual intrusion are hardly conducive to a good pedestrian experience.

Safety is another key issue for pedestrians. The two intersections closest to the station – Geneva Avenue and San Jose Avenue, and Ocean Avenue and San Jose Avenue – have collision rates nearly double those typical for their street type and volume of traffic. Between 1995 and 1999, there were 14 reported accidents involving pedestrians and automobiles at Geneva and San Jose.

Cycling

While there are several designated bike routes to Balboa Park Station, including Ocean Avenue and Geneva Avenue, none of them are striped with bike lanes or other facilities, beyond the signs themselves. While bicycle racks are provided at the station, they are in an inconvenient location across Geneva Avenue, where there are few people walking by to provide a sense of security. Unsurprisingly, few cyclists use them.

Transit

Even though more than half of BART riders get to the station by transit, the quality of connections between buses, streetcars and BART trains is extremely poor. The J and K streetcars terminate in a narrow strip alongside the station in an area that feels more like part of Muni’s adjacent maintenance yard, and the waiting area lacks shelters, seating, and schedule information. The M streetcar terminates on San Jose Avenue south of Geneva Avenue. Passengers alighting from this line literally step out into the street, and then have to cross a busy intersection to get to the BART station.



Most of Muni’s bus lines stop on Geneva Avenue. Shelters here are too small for the large number of people – literally in the hundreds – waiting at peak times, and there is insufficient curb space for buses to pull in.

While a map in the station shows the location of Muni stops, there is little signage once passengers are on the street.

Taxis

There is no marked taxi stand on Geneva Avenue at the station. This means that taxis often load and unload in bus stops – adding to the delays to buses. It also makes it hard for passengers to know where to go to hail a taxi.

Kiss-and-Ride

Many drivers simply stop on the northbound I-280 off-ramp to drop off passengers, before continuing straight ahead across Geneva Avenue to rejoin the freeway. Other drivers stop on the northbound on-ramp, on Ocean Avenue or in the bus stops on Geneva Avenue – delaying buses and making it more difficult for them to pull in. While BART has a dedicated “kiss-and-ride” area on the south side of Geneva Avenue, most drivers find this a less convenient option for dropping people off.



The northbound I-280 off-ramp is often highly congested at peak times.

The streets around the station suffer from significant traffic congestion. Traffic waiting to exit northbound I-280 often backs up down the off-ramp onto the freeway travel lanes.

Access for People with Disabilities

The BART station itself complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. However, the area around the station contains many barriers for people with disabilities, including:

- Steep grades, particularly on Geneva Avenue

- Steps for passengers coming from Ocean Avenue, and for passengers connecting from BART to Muni streetcars

- A lack of curb cuts on many sidewalks

- Uneven sidewalks in many places

- No elevator on the south side of Geneva Avenue, meaning wheelchair users have to cross the street to transfer to BART from bus stops here

Chapter 3 A New Neighborhood for San Francisco

The high level of transit access and usage at Balboa Park, despite its many problems, provides an extraordinary opportunity to create a unique, new San Francisco neighborhood around the station. Just like many other special neighborhoods in the city, Balboa Park could draw much of its vitality and interest from the hustle and bustle of people getting on and off trains and buses. The neighborhood could be re-invented as an “urban transit village”, combining efficient transit services with a strong sense of neighborhood identity and a real center of interest and activity for people.

As well as helping to alleviate the Bay Area’s pressing housing shortage, transit-oriented development – both residential and commercial – brings numerous benefits for transit riders.

People living, working and shopping in the station area lend interest, safety and warmth to what is now a bleak and uninteresting place, while activity on the street discourages crime and helps passengers feel safer while waiting for buses or trains. Refreshment stands, cafes and convenience stores can serve commuters and local residents alike.

New development, meanwhile, would bring more transit riders to Balboa Park, helping to reduce automobile traffic and capitalize on the region’s existing investment in rail infrastructure. Development on BART or Muni property could also be a source of income to transit agencies, or act as a catalyst for many of the improvements in this comprehensive plan.



The Upper Yard and a freeway deck are prime sites for new housing and commercial development, as shown in this draft illustrative plan produced as part of the Better Neighborhoods 2002 program.

This chapter is intended to highlight the opportunities around the station, and what BART must keep in mind when planning improvement projects so as not to jeopardize future opportunities. BART must also keep in mind the ridership that the development will generate when planning capacity enhancements. Between 700 and 2,900 net new units of housing are envisaged in the neighborhood, depending on how many potential sites are developed. This could mean up to 1,150 new BART riders a day from residential development alone.¹ The regional Smart Growth Strategy, discussed in Chapter 1, conceives of even more development in the neighborhood.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

BART and the City of San Francisco have developed planning goals for the neighborhood that call for new development to be carefully designed so that it is a true asset to the neighborhood. In particular, it should contribute to a pedestrian-friendly street environment. Some of the City's key principles include:

Buildings should be built up to the sidewalk, and have interesting facades rather than blank walls or garage doors

Development should be integrated into the neighborhood through extending existing streets into new parcels of land, maintaining the regular grid pattern

The height and scale of buildings should be appropriate for the existing character of the neighborhood

Parking should be minimized to capitalize on the excellent transit access, while ensuring that street parking for existing residents does not become more difficult

Development should include a mix of residential, retail and small-scale office uses

Housing should cater to a variety of income levels

Developers should be strongly encouraged to fund transit improvements as part of their proposals

As well as creating a more walkable, vibrant neighborhood, these principles will help improve access to the station and promote BART ridership.

¹ This figure assumes an average of two residents per dwelling unit, and is based on the current propensity of residents in the Balboa Park catchment area to use BART.

UPPER YARD

The City sees the Upper Yard, on the south side of Geneva Avenue across the street from the station, as one of the best near-term opportunities for development. Muni owns part of the site, using it mainly to store historic streetcars, while BART owns the kiss-and-ride area used by motorists that wait to pick up passengers.

Along Geneva Avenue, the City believes the most appropriate uses might be ground-floor retail serving local residents and commuters, with apartments on the upper floors. It wants to encourage developers to include a public glass “atrium” lobby, containing entrances to shops and an enclosed waiting area for bus passengers, as well as the BART station entrance. On the San Jose Avenue side, a mix of apartment buildings and town houses is envisaged.



Improvements to this entrance on the south side of Geneva Avenue are to be the subject of a major planning effort by BART.

BART is embarking on a major planning effort to determine improvements to the station entrance on the south side of Geneva, which might include a new elevator and escalator (see Chapter 5). The final design will be compatible with the City's vision for the site. The remodeled entrance may be constructed as part of new development on the Upper Yard, or built earlier as a stand-alone project, as long as this does not preclude different development options for the site.

An Upper Yard development has enormous potential to address many of the current problems experienced by BART riders – in particular difficult transfers to Muni streetcars and buses.

FREEWAY DECK

The I-280 freeway currently divides the Balboa Park neighborhood into two halves, both physically and psychologically. Under the City’s long-range Better Neighborhoods vision, a deck would be constructed over the highway between Ocean and Geneva Avenues. It would consolidate the current complex system of freeway on- and off-ramps into one pair of ramps on Geneva and a matching pair on Ocean, and carry a new local street to link these two pairs of ramps.

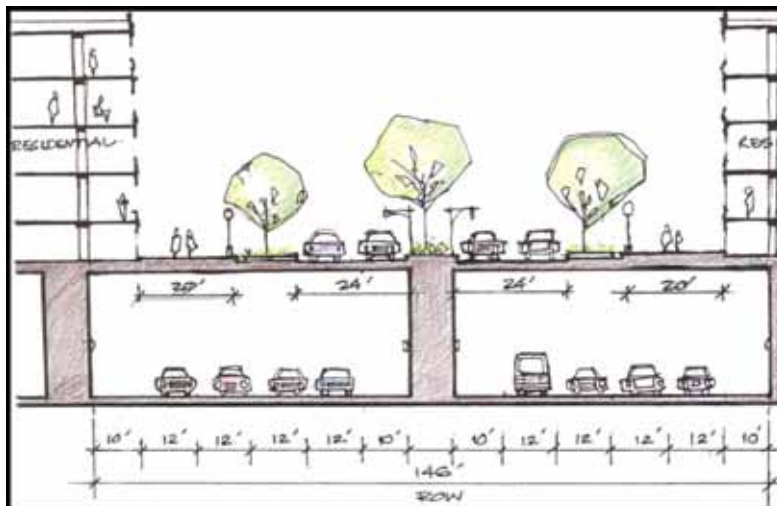
Freeway Caps

Successful freeway capping projects have been completed throughout the United States, transforming the landscape by replacing noisy vacant airspace above freeways with shops, housing, offices, public facilities or open space. Examples include a 5-acre Freeway Park above I-5 in Seattle, a 9.5 acre office and retail development over a turnpike in Boston, and the Lake Place Park above I-35 in Duluth, MN.



This design, known as a “Single Point Urban Interchange”, is a relatively new concept that has been successfully introduced elsewhere in California. As well as improving the safety and functioning of the ramps, the deck would create “new land” over the freeway. New buildings on these sites would be essential in creating a human-scaled development pattern, rather than a large, auto-dominated overpass.

On the station side of the freeway, streetcar tracks and platforms would occupy much of the ground floor space. The City also envisages stores and other facilities serving transit passengers, such as cafes, dry cleaners and small shops. Offices might be built on the upper floors and above the streetcar tracks. Housing and offices might be the best match for new development on the other side of the freeway next to Lick-Wilmerding High School, accord-



The proposed freeway deck would see a new local street and residential or commercial development above I-280.

ing to the Better Neighborhoods plan, together with a central neighborhood green.

A freeway deck would bring substantial benefits to BART and its riders. The new street between Ocean and Geneva Avenues would provide substantial new curb space for taxis, buses and private motorists to pick up and drop off passengers. The deck would also make Balboa Park a more inviting place for pedestrians, encouraging people to walk to the station, and providing amenities for passengers.

While the freeway deck is a project for the longer-term, it is important that any BART projects in the interim do not preclude its success. In particular, any designs should allow for the station to be ‘opened out’ to the west, with a new entrance leading directly onto the deck.



A restored Geneva Office Building could help generate activity around the station in the evening as well as during the day.

GENEVA OFFICE BUILDING

The historic Geneva Office Building lies diagonally opposite the BART station, at the intersection of Geneva and San Jose Avenues. It is currently fenced off and disused due to seismic safety issues, but local residents have expressed a strong desire to see the building used for community activities or educational services. This activity would help make the area around the BART station feel more secure, particularly in the evening, and would also generate more riders for BART.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are numerous other sites around the station that might accommodate new housing and commercial development. Some of the most promising sites include the school district’s land along San Jose Avenue, the donut store on Geneva Avenue and the vacant land next to it, and the service station at Ocean and San Jose Avenue. In the longer term, ‘air rights’ development may be feasible above Muni’s Green Yard maintenance facility next to the BART station.



Further to the west, City College has ambitious expansion plans, while Muni plans to develop its Phelan Loop bus turnaround. Other potential development sites include the Kragen Auto Parts store, Sunset Garage and the McDonald's parking lot on Ocean Avenue. The reservoir on Phelan Avenue – currently used for City College parking – represents a further major development opportunity.

While most of these projects would not affect BART directly, they will bring new transit riders to Balboa Park. In particular, the City College, reservoir and Phelan Loop developments would mean more people accessing the station from Ocean Avenue – making the lack of a dedicated entrance on this side of the station a more important issue to address.

Chapter 4 Access to Balboa Park Station

Even more so than other stations on the BART system, the quality of access to Balboa Park Station is critical. Good bus, pedestrian and bicycle links, together with adequate space for taxis and private motorists to pick people up and drop them off, are essential, particularly since the station does not benefit from any dedicated parking for BART riders.

Most of the access improvements here will fall to the City of San Francisco, Muni and other agencies to implement, rather than BART itself. However, two specific projects – the upgraded pathway to Ocean Avenue and improved bicycle parking facilities – are being led by BART. In addition, the improvements to the station itself, described in the following chapter, will greatly enhance access to the station, as well as increase capacity. In particular, the new entrance from Ocean Avenue will ease travel from City College, the Balboa Park sports facilities and other areas to the north.

WALKING

Virtually all BART and Muni journeys start or end by foot. In the short term, pedestrian access can be enhanced through small-scale measures such as improving crosswalks. Specific measures proposed by the City include:

Signalized crosswalks or stop signs at freeway off-ramps.

These would particularly benefit people walking to and from City College, who have to cross the Ocean Avenue off-ramps.

Redesigned freeway off-ramps. Making the curves tighter would force traffic to slow down as it exits the freeway, signifying that the motorist is entering an urban street where lower speeds are appropriate. This would be a short-term measure, in advance of the freeway deck (Chapter 3).



Countdown indicators such as this at Market and Castro streets in San Francisco have cut collisions between vehicles and pedestrians by around two-thirds.

Countdown indicators at key intersections.

These show the pedestrian how much time they have left to cross the street, and have dramatically reduced collisions in other parts of San Francisco. Crosswalks on Geneva Avenue are a high priority for Countdown indicators.

New crosswalk on Ocean Avenue. This would provide a safe link between the station and the park.

Wider sidewalks and more prominent crosswalks. Along major traffic streets, sidewalks should be widened where possible and bulbouts introduced, particularly at intersections and transit stops. Boldly marked crosswalks would make drivers more aware of pedestrians. Ocean and Geneva Avenues would be a focus for improvements, with Ocean Avenue redesigned as a tree-lined pedestrian and transit boulevard.



The new pathway would replace the informal route alongside the Muni streetcar tracks.

Pathway to Ocean Avenue

BART is working with Muni to finalize the design for a new path to provide direct pedestrian access from the station to Ocean Avenue. A raised walkway alongside the Muni streetcar tracks is one option being considered, improving safety by reducing conflicts between pedestrians and streetcars, and providing access for people with disabilities. This pathway is intended as a short-term improvement, in advance of the new Ocean Avenue entrance (see Chapter 5).

BIKING

Good bicycle access dramatically increases the number of people within a short trip of a station. Most people can walk half a mile in ten minutes, but cycle two or three miles in the same time. Good bike access needs both safe routes to and from stations, and convenient, secure bicycle parking.

Some of the measures proposed or to be explored further by the City include:

Bike lanes on Ocean and Phelan Avenues. These streets are designated bike routes in the San Francisco Bicycle Plan, but have no facilities for cyclists apart from signage.

A bicycle boulevard on Holloway Street. Holloway Street is a quieter, residential street that is an excellent candidate for a “bicycle boulevard” – in essence, a bicycle expressway where stop signs are replaced with landscaped traffic circles. Holloway is also a designated bike route, and is a key route to San Francisco State University.

In addition, BART intends to improve facilities for cyclists at the station itself, through providing more secure parking and installing bike stair channels. While bicycle racks already exist at Balboa Park station, they are inconveniently located and positioned out of sight of most passing pedestrians, meaning that many cyclists are reluctant to use them. Additional racks and lockers would be provided in a clearly visible location close to the station entrance.

For cyclists who want to take their bikes with them on BART, stair channels could be installed. These allow a bicycle to be wheeled rather than carried up and down the stairs to the concourse and platform.

TRANSIT

More than half of passengers at Balboa Park get from home to the BART station by transit – the highest proportion anywhere on the BART system outside downtown San Francisco. Many simple improvements such as the installation of NextBus-style up-to-the-minute information can help improve connections between BART and Muni, and also between different Muni streetcar and bus lines. This plan envisages a new Geneva Plaza marking a clear gateway into the station, a freeway deck providing more space for loading and unloading, and ultimately a fully-fledged Intermodal Transit Center bringing streetcars into a new station at street level alongside the BART platforms.

Pedestrian improvements such as boldly marked crosswalks are also extremely important for people accessing the station by transit – particularly to get to the bus stops on the south side of Geneva Avenue. Transit-oriented development on the Upper Yard, meanwhile, will provide shops and services for commuters, and make the station area a more attractive place.

Intermodal Transit Center

The ultimate goal of the City is to create a new Intermodal Transit Center at Balboa Park, fully integrating Muni streetcar and BART services into a single station. From the passenger's perspective, the BART station and the Muni station would be one and the same.

The Intermodal Transit Center would relocate streetcar platforms, with the BART tracks and platforms remaining in their present locations. This vision is therefore primarily driven by the City and Muni, although BART needs to work closely with them to ensure that transfers are as seamless as possible. BART also needs to ensure that its projects do not preclude the different options, in particular through retaining the ability to 'open out' the BART station to the west.



This concept sketch shows one option developed by the City for an Intermodal Transit Center.

The K line would terminate on the freeway deck, immediately to the west of the BART station. The configuration of the J and M lines will depend on Muni's decisions on their routing. Two options are:

A new terminus for the M-Oceanview underneath the western edge of the Upper Yard, on an extension of the BART concourse level. The J-Church would terminate on the freeway deck next to the K-Ingleside.

Extending the J-Church streetcar to San Francisco State University along the M-Oceanview route, which would be corre-

spondingly shortened. This option, which has been proposed by Muni in the past, would reduce the number of tracks required at Balboa Park, as only the K-Ingleside would terminate here. New platforms for the J line would be constructed on San Jose Avenue at the Geneva Avenue Intersection.

Regardless of the exact design, the new station would contribute to the neighborhood by having a strong street presence, with well-defined, distinctive entrances on both Ocean and Geneva Avenues – benefiting BART as well as Muni riders. The entrance on Geneva Avenue might include a grand entrance lobby or similar architectural statement. The station would be characterized by a feeling of space, light and airiness, helping to alleviate any sense of claustrophobia.

Faster and More Reliable Muni Services

More than half of BART riders use Muni services to get from home to Balboa Park station. Planned improvements will speed up buses and streetcars – increasing BART ridership by bringing more people within a given travel time of the station, and encouraging them to take transit to the station rather than drive.

Measures to reduce Muni travel time will also improve reliability and reduce overcrowding. Buses and streetcars that are insulated from traffic congestion, with their own dedicated lane, are less likely to bunch together and cause delays. In turn, more even spacing of buses and streetcars will all but eliminate overcrowding on Muni lines in Balboa Park.

Specific measures proposed by the City to speed up transit in the neighborhood include:

- Priority for transit at traffic signals

- Stop sign removal on major transit routes, and replacement with signals

- Consideration of a dedicated lane for the K-Ingleside streetcar, between Phelan and Junipero Serra, and for the 15-Third bus line on Geneva Avenue

- Restricted curb cuts on major transit streets, so that buses are not forced to wait behind vehicles waiting to turn left into garages or other off-street parking

Consideration of restructuring Muni’s feeder services to serve the station more effectively

Improving the Transit Experience

While travel time is a key factor determining whether a person chooses to take transit rather than drive, the quality or dignity of the travel experience is also extremely important. Passengers will be less likely to use Muni if it makes them feel more frustrated and stressed, and less valuable.

Transit stops in Balboa Park should, at a minimum, provide basic information and shelter from the wind and cold. Urban design improvements, including attractive paving and street trees, can help make them a more attractive place to wait. NextBus-style real-time information should be installed at all key stops, particularly those at the station itself.

Geneva Plaza

Geneva Avenue between San Jose Avenue and the freeway ramps will be the heart of the new “transit village” and the ‘front door’ of the station. As well as a functional space for people to wait for buses in comfort, a new plaza would clearly define a sense of arrival and a focal point of entry to the station.



This sketch shows one option for a transit plaza on the north side of Geneva Avenue (left) and development on the Upper Yard (right).

Freeway Deck

The new local street on the freeway deck will create valuable new curb space for bus lines that terminate at the station, although many lines may continue to load and unload on Geneva Avenue to avoid making a detour. The deck will also provide space for motorists to pick up and drop off passengers – reducing conflicts with buses on Geneva Avenue itself.



KISS-AND-RIDE AND TAXIS

The station's position next to Interstate 280 makes it a convenient place for motorists to pick up and drop off passengers. In the short-term, better signage and curb markings, and the use of sidewalk bulbs to clearly separate pick-up areas from bus stops, will help improve traffic flow and safety, and reduce conflicts with buses. Taxi zones should also be clearly marked.

The freeway deck will provide more space for dropping off and picking up passengers, in place of today's often haphazard kiss-and-ride.

The most significant improvements to kiss-and-ride access will come with the freeway deck. Motorists will be able to exit the freeway and drop off or pick up passengers along the new local street created above the freeway, before simply continuing straight ahead to rejoin I-280. The deck will also provide extra curb space, giving ample room for buses, taxis and private motorists to stop.

PARKING

Balboa Park station, like other San Francisco BART stations, provides no dedicated parking spaces for passengers. Some find on-street spaces, although some of the neighborhood is covered by the City's Residential Permit Parking zone, restricting parking by non-residents.



Given the extremely restricted supply of parking around the station, it needs to be carefully managed to prioritize those who need it most. The City's priorities are as follows:

First priority – Muni and BART employees working late night or early morning shifts, and car-sharing services

Second priority – Visitors to Balboa Park

Third priority – Short-term (non-commute) BART and Muni riders, such as midday shoppers

These priorities can be implemented through a combination of permits, time limits and meters. In view of the competing demands for space, all-day parking should not be provided for BART or Muni riders.

Chapter 5 BART’s Station Masterplan

This chapter sets out BART’s own Station Masterplan for Balboa Park, providing a detailed overview of the projects that BART is proposing to improve capacity and access to the station. The plan is envisaged to be implemented in four distinct phases – the first of which has already entered construction.

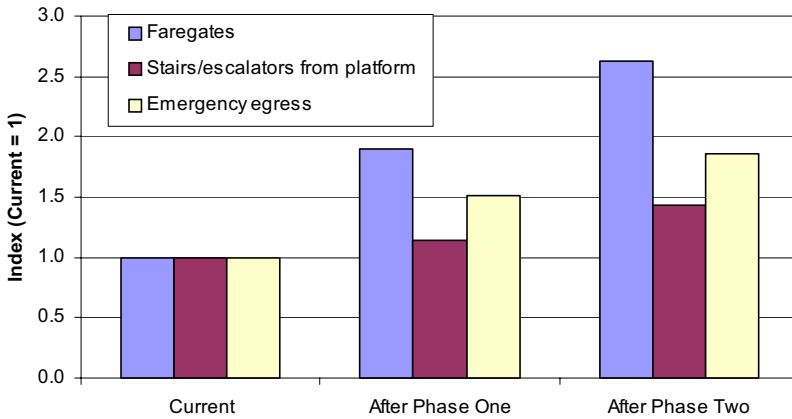


Figure 5-1: Capacity Enhancements. Phases 1 and 2 will double the capacity of Balboa Park through adding more faregates, ticket machines, stairs, escalators and elevators.

Phase	Improvements	Benefits
Phase 1A Station capacity expansion	More faregates New stair and escalator to platform level Upgraded emergency stairs	Reduce queuing for stairs and faregates Improve emergency exiting capacity
Phase 1B Station capacity expansion to south side of Geneva Avenue	Could include new escalator and elevator on south side of Geneva	Ease transfers to Muni buses and streetcars, particularly for people with disabilities Improve access to development on Upper Yard
Phase 2 Ocean Avenue entrance	Direct station entrance from Ocean Avenue New faregates, stair and elevator	Enhance overall station capacity Provide safe, direct access from Ocean Avenue, including City College Provide amenities for riders such as a cafe
Phase 3 Increased concourse capacity	Relocate offices on concourse	Provide more space for movement within the station

Figure 5-2: Phasing Plan

PHASE 1A - UNDER CONSTRUCTION

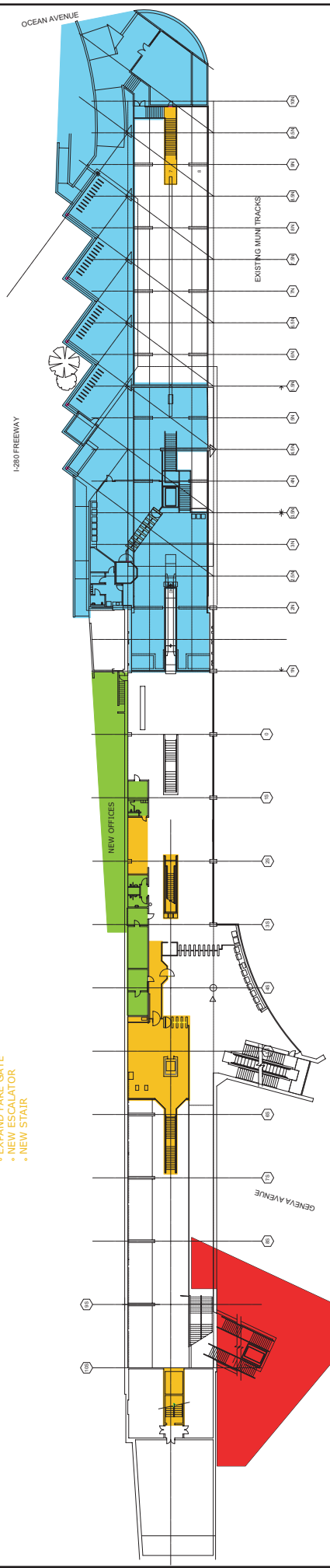
- IMPROVE EMERGENCY EXITS
- EXPAND FARE GATE
- NEW ESCALATOR
- NEW STAIR

PHASE 3 - FAR FUTURE

- RELOCATE OFFICE FACILITIES OFF OF CONCOURSE FLOOR

PHASE 2 - POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECT

- MID STATION ENTRANCE



PHASE 1B - CONCEPT STUDY UNDER WAY

- NEW STAIR
- NEW ESCALATOR
- NEW ELEVATOR
- IMPROVE PATRIOT SHELTER
- IMPROVE TRANSIT CONNECTIONS

BALBOA PARK STATION
EXPANSION PROJECT
MASTER PLAN
MAY 8, 2022

BALBOA PARK STATION EXPANSION PROJECT MASTER PLAN

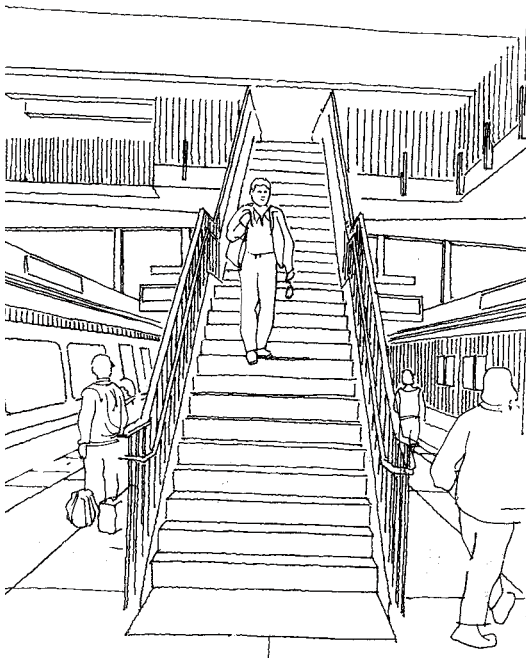
STATION CAPACITY EXPANSION – PHASE 1A

A new stair and escalator between the platform and concourse, to reduce queuing on the platform, are at the heart of the first phase of improvement. The escalator will replace the existing stair closest to the faregates. The new stair will be installed at the southern end of the platform, emerging on the concourse near the existing elevator. This area will be made into a new ‘paid area’ – a part of the station where passengers need to have a ticket to enter.

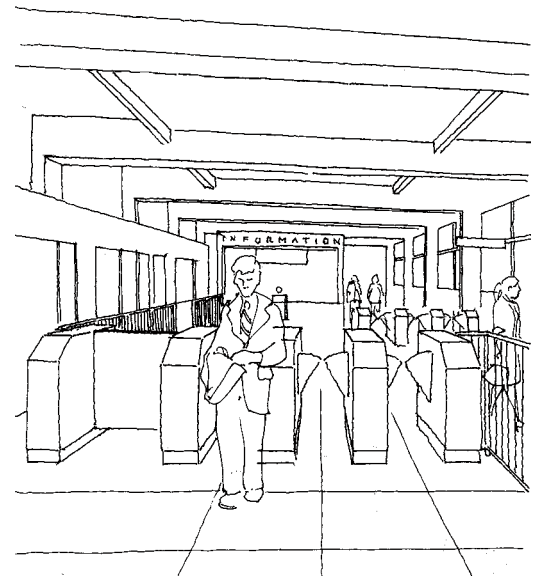
More faregates will also be installed, doubling the number from six to twelve. Some of these will be in a new bank of faregates, opposite the agent’s booth. One faregate will be extra wide, allowing passengers with disabilities, heavy luggage or strollers to pass easily, without needing assistance from station staff. There will also be two new ticket machines and an addfare machine.



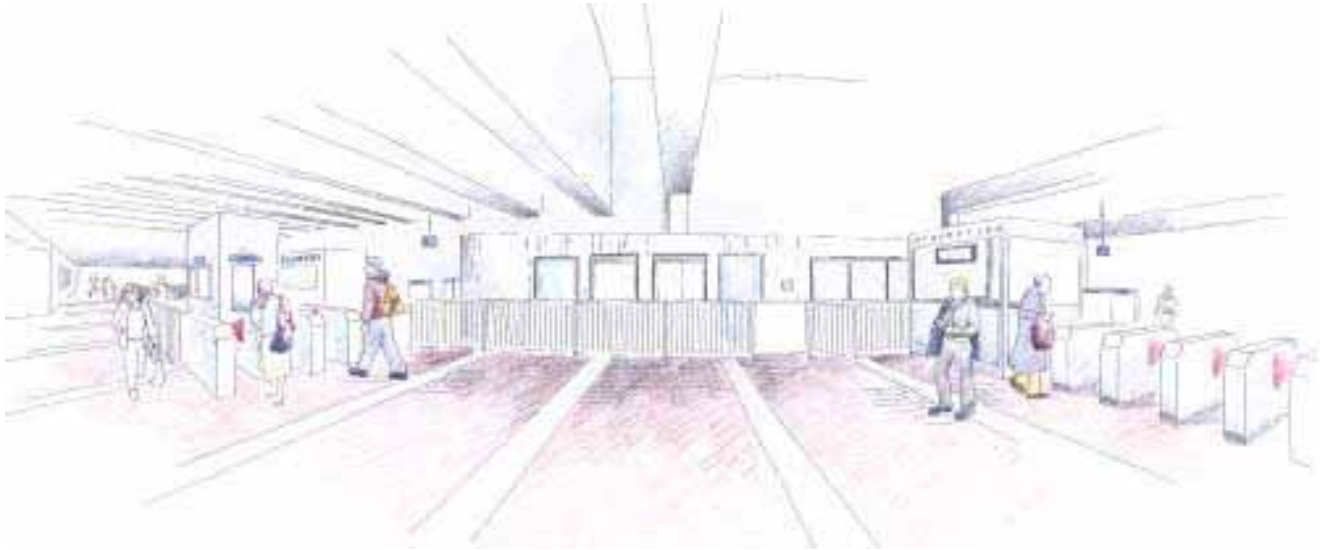
The emergency stair at the north end of the station will be rebuilt to make it wider and less steep.



The new stair will reduce crowding on the platform.



Additional faregates will help reduce queuing.



A new bank of faregates (left) will face the existing gates and agent's booth

Phase 1A also includes specific measures to increase the capacity of emergency exits. A new doorway will allow passengers direct access to the emergency stair at the south end of the platform, instead of being forced to climb over the barrier and enter via the train tunnel. The emergency stair at the Ocean

Avenue end of the platform will be rebuilt to be wider and less steep.



Construction on Phase 1A began in June 2002, in a ceremony attended by district supervisor Gerardo Sandoval (right).

Construction on this phase, which is fully funded under the Governor's Traffic Congestion Relief Program, began in June 2002.

STATION CAPACITY EXPANSION TO SOUTH SIDE OF GENEVA AVENUE – PHASE 1B

The underpass provides direct access to the BART station from the south side of Geneva Avenue. It is particularly useful for passengers transferring to Muni buses or the M-Oceanview streetcar, to avoid crossing the busy street. However, access at present is only via a stair, and passengers with disabilities need to cross Geneva Avenue to use the elevator on the north side.

BART is currently embarking on a planning study to determine options for Phase 1B, which may include a new stair, escalator and elevator. The study will build on the City’s Better Neighborhoods plan, which calls for the design of this entrance to emphasize neighborhood character and create a stronger sense of civic identity, as opposed to its current utilitarian appearance.

The entrance could be constructed as part of transit oriented development on the Upper Yard. One option is to incorporate a glass-fronted ‘atrium’ into the development, housing entrances to shops and the BART station, and providing an enclosed waiting area for bus passengers.

BART’s Tickets and Faregates

The new faregates and ticket machines installed at Balboa Park will all be of BART’s new design. They will accept the plastic smart cards that are soon to be rolled out across the BART system, replacing fare collection equipment that is up to 25 years old and relegating problems with bent or wet tickets to the past. One of the key aims is to improve customer service, through providing more reliable equipment, more payment options, faster transactions and the new smart cards.

While this project will prepare the site for the installation of new automatic fare collection equipment, the new machines – and the replacement of existing machines – will take place under separate procurement contracts, as part of the systemwide modernization program.

OCEAN AVENUE ENTRANCE – PHASE 2

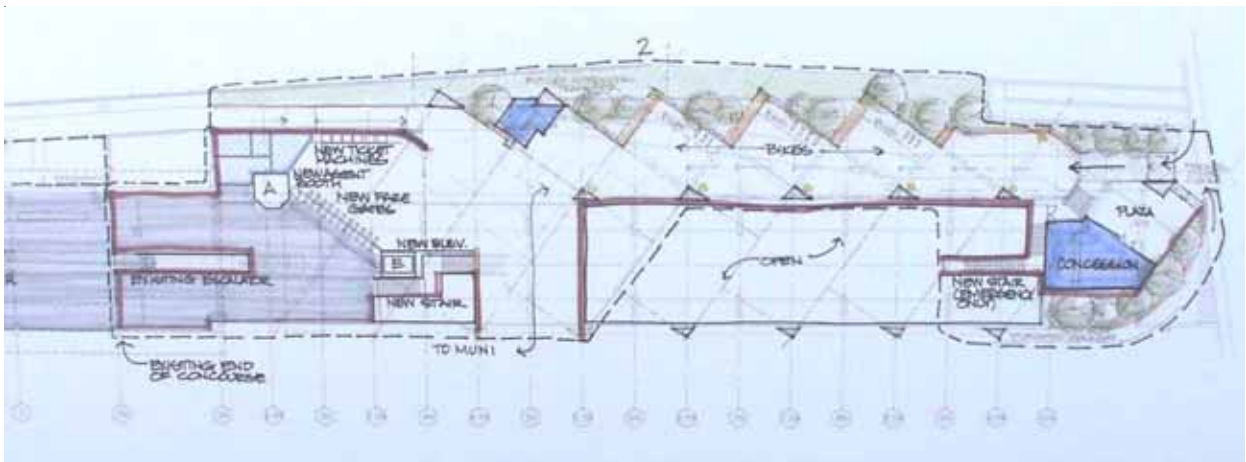
In the medium term, a new north entrance to the station from Ocean Avenue would bring the most dramatic improvements in pedestrian access – as well as providing additional capacity through faregates and stairs. It would provide a safer, shorter pedestrian route to both BART and Muni from City College, Balboa and Lick-Wilmerding High Schools, and the residential neighborhoods to the north. The new entrance would also build on the Phase 1 improvements to further enhance capacity at Balboa Park station.



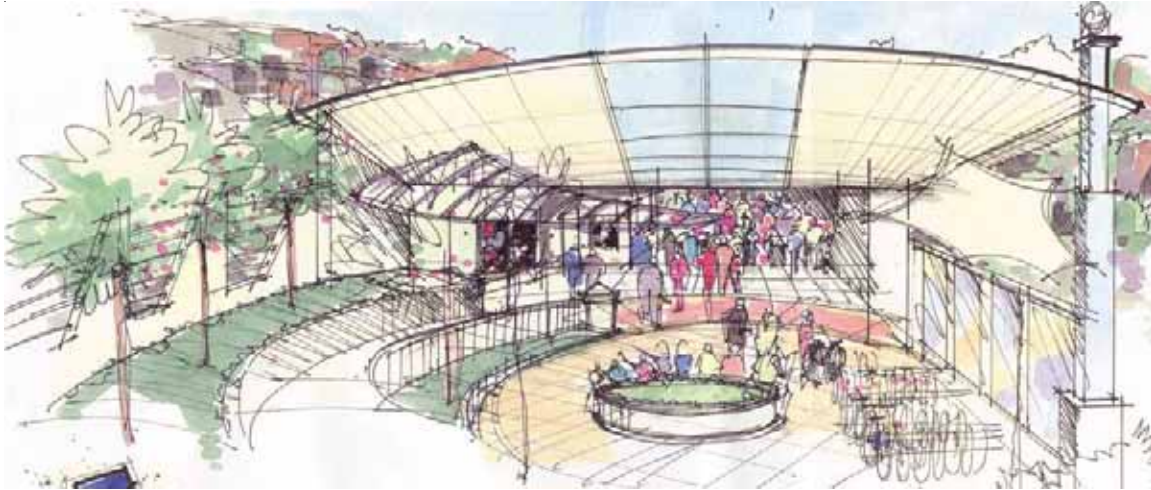
The concourse could be extended above the tracks to provide space for the new entrance.

Two pathways already connect the station to Ocean Avenue. However, they force passengers to either take a circuitous route round to the Geneva Avenue entrance via a walkway alongside the freeway, or the narrow, uneven path alongside the Muni streetcar tracks.

The Ocean Avenue entrance could be realized by extending the existing concourse (the mezzanine level between platform and street) over the platform to the north, towards Ocean Avenue.



Phase 2 would see a new north entrance from Ocean Avenue.



A plaza might mark the entrance from Ocean Avenue.

Part of the platform that is currently open to the sky might be covered over, leaving approximately one-third of the platform at the far north end in daylight. One possibility is for a large clock tower and sign or similar feature to be installed at the new entrance, “announcing” the presence of the station in a dramatic way.

The Ocean Avenue entrance could include:

An additional set of faregates, and a new agent’s booth and ticket machines.



High-quality architecture would be a hallmark of the Ocean Avenue entrance.

A new stair between platform and concourse at the Ocean Avenue end of the station. Passengers will also be able to use the existing escalator.

A new elevator between platform and concourse. A gentle ramp could be provided from the concourse up to Ocean Avenue, meaning that no elevator to street level would be necessary at this end of the station.

Easy, direct access to Muni streetcars for passengers arriving from Ocean Avenue, without having to pass through the BART faregates.

High-quality signage, including real-time NextBus-style information.

Spaces for concessions such as a newsstand, florist or café – one at the far north end, adjoining Ocean Avenue, and a smaller space just before the faregates.

INCREASING CONCOURSE CAPACITY – PHASE 3

Phase 3 would relocate the offices that are currently sited on the concourse, providing more space for passengers to circulate. Plans for this phase, however, have not been developed yet in detail, and this should be seen as a potential long-term project.

Seismic Retrofitting at Balboa Park

BART's recent Systemwide Seismic Vulnerability Study Report examined the seismic retrofitting needs at stations across the system, using computer modeling techniques. It concluded that both the overhead canopy and the reinforced concrete box which houses the station are seismically sound, and no retrofitting is presently required.

Chapter 6 Implementation

This chapter sets out the necessary implementation steps to realize the vision of this Comprehensive Station Plan. The table below details the full list of recommended proposals. Each recommendation addresses implementation and cost. However, the recommendations have not been prioritized based on any set of criteria.

Costs for the majority of projects are still to be determined. This is largely because most are still conceptual ideas, and their scope has yet to be finalized and detailed engineering studies conducted. Where preliminary estimates have been developed, costs are included in the table. Developing cost estimates for the remaining proposed projects will be an important next step. In some cases, most notably the development opportunities, the cost will be borne by developers, and may even result in some net income for BART and other public agencies. In addition to this program of proposed projects, BART in the regular course of business renovates and maintains all BART facilities, including Balboa Park Station.

While projects have not been prioritized, their relative timing will be critical to the plan's success. The benefits of the new north entrance from Ocean Avenue, for example, will be greatly reduced if supporting pedestrian infrastructure, such as crosswalks and redesigned freeway off-ramps to slow traffic, is not in place. Conversely, BART will be best able to capture the potential ridership gains from new development on the reservoir and other sites on Ocean Avenue once the new north entrance is open.

Annually, BART develops a comprehensive Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which outlines projects that are underway, planned and proposed, delineates their costs and identifies secured and projected funding. Proposed projects for which BART is the lead agency will be included in BART's CIP FY2003-2004. Funding for some proposed projects has been identified. These projects are shown in the CIP, Track 1. Other

proposed projects for which funding has not yet been identified are listed in the CIP, Track 2. It is worthwhile to note that several systemwide renovation and service and capacity enhancement projects, which also impact the Balboa Park Station, are included in the CIP but are not explicitly identified in this plan.

The project "lead" shown in the following table remains a key distinction among the projects recommended in the Comprehensive Station Plan. BART generally has full authority to lead implementation of projects on its property, and can better control the implementation schedule. In many cases, though, other agencies such as Muni and Caltrans have the lead implementation responsibility, and BART's commitment may range from funding partnership to a non-paying endorsement, with less responsibility to manage and control the project schedule.

Balboa Park Comprehensive Station Plan

Project	Description	Est. Cost	S/M/L Term	Lead Agency
BART's Station Masterplan (Chapter 5)				
Phase 1A: Station Capacity Expansion	Vertical circulation and fare collection expansion	\$5.41 million	Under construction	BART
Phase 1B: Station Capacity expansion to S. Side of Geneva Avenue -- Planning	Vertical circulation expansion	\$250,000	S	BART
Phase 1B: Station capacity expansion to S. side of Geneva Avenue -- Design & Construction	Vertical circulation expansion	\$4 million	S/M	BART
Phase 2: Ocean Avenue Entrance	New faregates, stair and elevator	\$43 million	L	BART
Phase 3: Increased Concourse Capacity	Relocate offices on concourse to increase paid area		L	BART
Development Opportunities (Chapter 3)				
Upper Yard Joint Development	Transit-oriented, mixed-use development on south side of Geneva Avenue, incorporating a transit waiting area and BART entrance		M	BART/ External Stakeholder
Freeway Deck	Deck over I-280 between Geneva and Ocean Avenues, providing 'new land' for development and a new local street for buses, streetcars and passenger drop-off		M/L	External Stakeholder
Other development opportunities	Geneva Office Building, reservoir, Kragen Auto Parts and other sites provide major development opportunities, increasing BART ridership and promoting a 'sense of place.'		M/L	External Stakeholder
Access Improvements (Chapter 4; see Access Plan for more details)				
Station area planning	Multi-agency coordinated planning to take forward Better Neighborhoods 2002 proposals	\$2 million	S/M	BART/ External Stakeholder
Pedestrian access improvements (Ocean Avenue Pathway)	Provide accessible path to Ocean Avenue	\$1.121 million	S	BART
Improved neighborhood pedestrian amenities	Widened sidewalks, signage, prominent crosswalks, Countdown indicators, and redesigned freeway off-ramps to slow traffic		S	External Stakeholder
Completed bike network in the neighborhood	Bike lanes on streets such as Ocean and Phelan Avenues		S	External Stakeholder
Upgraded bicycle parking	Bike racks in prominent, convenient locations, and more bike lockers		S	BART
Bike stair channels	Install bike stair channels at new stairs		L	BART
Reduce delays to on-street transit	Introduce measure such as signal priority, dedicated right-of-way and restrictions on curb cuts		L	External Stakeholder
Restructure feeder bus service	Study possible reroutings to better serve Balboa Park Station		S	External Stakeholder
Urban design improvements at transit stops	Street trees, special paving, upgraded shelters and other improvements		S/M	External Stakeholder
Geneva Plaza	Provide a plaza or similar transit waiting area on the north side of Geneva, adjacent to the main BART station entrance		M	External Stakeholder
Drop-off and pick-up zones	Provide clearly marked drop-off and pick-up areas for taxis and kiss-and-ride		S	External Stakeholder
Intermodal Transit Center	Relocate Muni streetcar platforms into an intermodal terminal, physically integrated with the BART station		L	External Stakeholder
Other intermodal station access improvements	Implement other recommendations generated from station area planning work		S/M/L	BART/ External Stakeholder