



## **Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's Berryessa Transit Center Earns Envision® Platinum Award**



The Berryessa Transit Center is a multi-modal regional transportation hub located in northeastern San Jose, California. It is situated adjacent to the San Jose Flea Market and Upper Penitencia Creek. The project enhances community quality of life in the city by addressing the transportation needs in the congested San Francisco Bay Area, providing much needed connectivity between local transportation systems, and increasing access to service for all – including low-income, youth, elderly, and people with disabilities.

The Berryessa Transit Center incorporates a number of elements, including:

- A BART commuter rail station.
- A bus transit center connecting riders to VTA's frequent and express bus service to downtown San Jose and other destinations throughout Santa Clara County.
- Bicycle storage and cyclist and pedestrian trail connections.
- A drop-off and pick-up area for passengers and employer shuttles.

- A multi-story parking garage equipped with electric vehicle charging stations, motion-sensor lighting, and solar panels.
- A stream and riparian habitat restoration, including a widened floodplain, with all areas replanted with native species to support local wildlife and improve water quality.
- Public spaces featuring locally created public art and a contemplative garden.

The Berryessa Transit Center was completed as part of the first phase of VTA's BART Silicon Valley (BSV) Program that will ultimately extend BART service for 16 miles into Santa Clara County. The second phase of the BSV Program will extend service from the Berryessa Transit Center through Downtown San Jose and terminate in Santa Clara, with early construction anticipated to begin in 2022. The BSV Program aims to bring regional rail service to nearly 2 million county residents and "ring the Bay" with frequent and reliable rail service. The Berryessa Transit Center is expected to accommodate up to 25,000 daily BART passengers by 2030 (Source: Draft 2nd Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, November 2010 and Final 2nd Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, February 2011). It facilitates 60-minute trips to neighboring San Francisco and provides convenient access to freeways. Overall, the Berryessa Transit Center enhances transit and multi-modal connectivity and spurs urban planning efforts that will greatly improve the quality of life for the surrounding community.

## KEY SUSTAINABILITY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Advancing Environmental Justice.** 6% of the households in San Jose within the study area of the BSV Program lack private transportation, making these households dependent on transit. This project provides greater transportation options for historically underserved communities that border the project, improving access to employment and critical services, such as education and healthcare.
- **Restoring the Natural World.** The project removed 4.5 acres of concrete and industrial buildings and replaced this hardscape with a 200-foot-wide creek habitat restoration that included realigning 920 linear feet of creek channel, daylighting approximately 0.02 acres of creek that was previously enclosed in a double box culvert, replanting riparian and upland habitat with native plantings, and creating over 1 acre of new wetland habitat. The project enhanced the ecological values of the site including providing for fish passage for the federally threatened Central California Coast steelhead.
- **Adding Public Space and Amenities.** In addition to providing bicycle and pedestrian trails and cycling facilities onsite, the project also includes a contemplative garden. This garden is a space designed to honor the Ohlone and educate the public about how they once lived and worked. The garden includes a monument, interpretive panel and educational signage, and native plants that were traditionally used by the Ohlone. The project team worked extensively with local community members of the Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area to develop the language of the interpretive panel, the plant identification signs, and the stone monument within the garden.
- **Improving Local Character.** The San Jose Flea Market is adjacent to the Berryessa Transit Center and is an important aspect of the area's local character. The project pays tribute to this landmark through a featured landscaping art-piece. In addition, the project replaces two aging stream crossings with one that spans the creek, thus enabling the public to enjoy the creek and its restored habitat.

- **Improving the Long-Term Sustainability of the Community.** Sustainability goals were considered in the earliest project conceptual and planning phases and were incorporated throughout design and construction. The project alleviates current and future unsustainable conditions in the community by expanding sustainable transportation options to historically underrepresented people and to a City that is expected to accommodate a population increase of more than 40% within the BSV Program study area. The project also addresses existing flood risks by including features such as bioretention basins and tree wells to promote groundwater recharge and proper drainage during large storm events.
- **Creating Local Jobs and Expanding Opportunities for Employment.** The first phase of the BSV Program which terminates at the Berryessa Transit Center provides approximately 600 long-term operations jobs. In addition, more than 3,800 jobs were created to support the construction of the station campus areas, access roadways, parking structures and transit centers, as well as another 4,000 indirect jobs in the community. Overall, within the study area of the BSV Program the City of San Jose is expected to increase the number of available jobs by 37% and housing by 45%, and the BTC project will facilitate residential and employment growth planned, particularly around the station area.

## SOUNDBITES

**Ann Calnan, VTA Environmental Programs Manager:** “The Envision Platinum recognition by the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure for the Berryessa Transit Center signifies the culmination of effort by VTA and consultant staff who planned, designed, and constructed the numerous sustainability features of this facility. Now in operation, the transit center is a shining example of integrating sustainability in as much of the project footprint as possible for the public to now enjoy, from EV chargers - to a new, multi-modal trail - to habitat restoration in an urban environment - to a contemplative garden honoring the Ohlone. It is very exciting to be recognized by the Institute for our collective achievement.”

**Melissa Peneycad, ISI’s Managing Director:** “Everyone involved in this project, including the community, should be extremely proud of what this project seeks to achieve when it comes to sustainability, resiliency, and equity. From protecting natural resources, creating jobs, improving long-term sustainability, and advancing environmental justice, this project prioritizes the community’s wants and needs, ensuring a brighter future for people in the region.”

### Project Details At-a-Glance

Envision-verified project:	Berryessa Transit Center
Location:	San Jose, California
Lead Envision Firm:	Keish Environmental
Envision Rating:	Platinum
Award Date:	March 30, 2021
Project Owner:	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Project Operator:	Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)
Project Phase:	Constructed—now operational
For more information:	<a href="http://www.vta.org/bart">www.vta.org/bart</a>

