



Jennings Avenue Pedestrian and  
Bicycle Rail Crossing  
Draft Environmental Impact Report

November 18, 2014  
Public Hearing on the Draft EIR

# Presentation Overview

- Project Background
- Project Overview
- Project Description
- Role of City Council
- Presentation of Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Public Hearing and Comments from Council

# Project Background

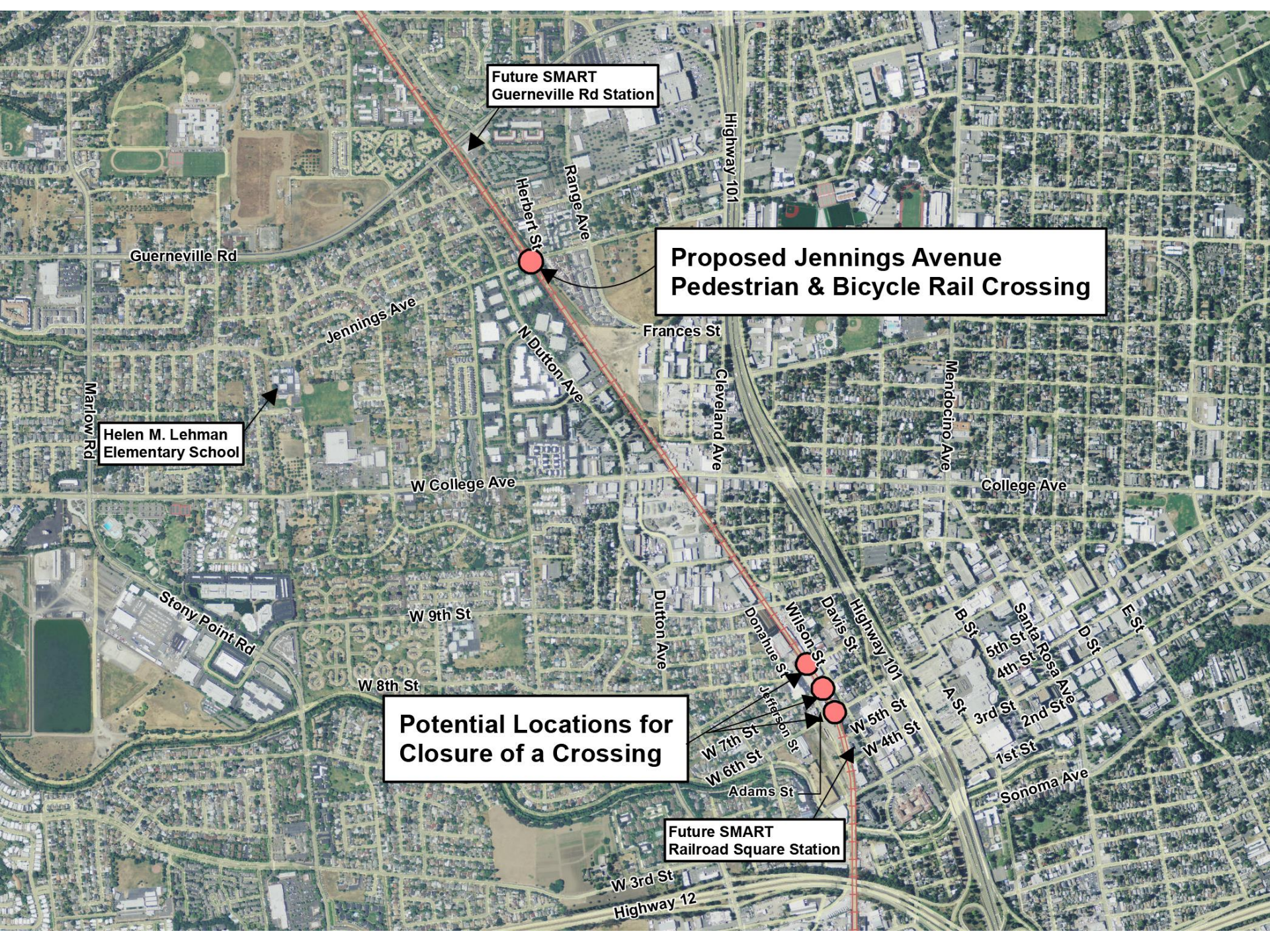
- August 2012 – Council authorized funding agreement with SMART for review and alternatives of a pedestrian and bicycle rail crossing at Jennings Ave
  
- October 2012 – SMART contractor completed a feasibility study for 4 potential layouts:
  1. No crossing
  2. At-grade crossing
  3. Overcrossing
  4. Undercrossing

# Project Background (continued)

- November 2012 – Feasibility study presented to Council
- May 2013 – Council directed staff to complete environmental review for an at-grade crossing, with possible removal of an existing crossing at W. 6<sup>th</sup>, W. 7<sup>th</sup> or W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and an overcrossing alternative
- September 2013 – GHD, Inc. was hired to prepare an EIR

# Project Overview

- The Draft EIR analyzes the preferred project and an alternative design at the same level of detail
- Council Identified Preferred Project – At-grade pedestrian and bicycle rail crossing, with a closure at either W. 6<sup>th</sup>, W. 7<sup>th</sup> or W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street
- Alternative Design – Pedestrian and bicycle rail overcrossing



**Future SMART  
Guerneville Rd Station**

**Proposed Jennings Avenue  
Pedestrian & Bicycle Rail Crossing**

**Helen M. Lehman  
Elementary School**

**Potential Locations for  
Closure of a Crossing**

**Future SMART  
Railroad Square Station**

Guerneville Rd

Jennings Ave

W College Ave

W 9th St

W 8th St

Stony Point Rd

Herbert St

Range Ave

N Dutton Ave

Frances St

Dutton Ave

Highway 101

Cleveland Ave

Donahue St

Wilson St

Davis St

W 7th St

W 6th St

Adams St

Highway 101

W 5th St

W 4th St

Mendocino Ave

College Ave

B St

5th St

4th St

3rd St

1st St

Santa Rosa Ave

2nd St

Sonoma Ave

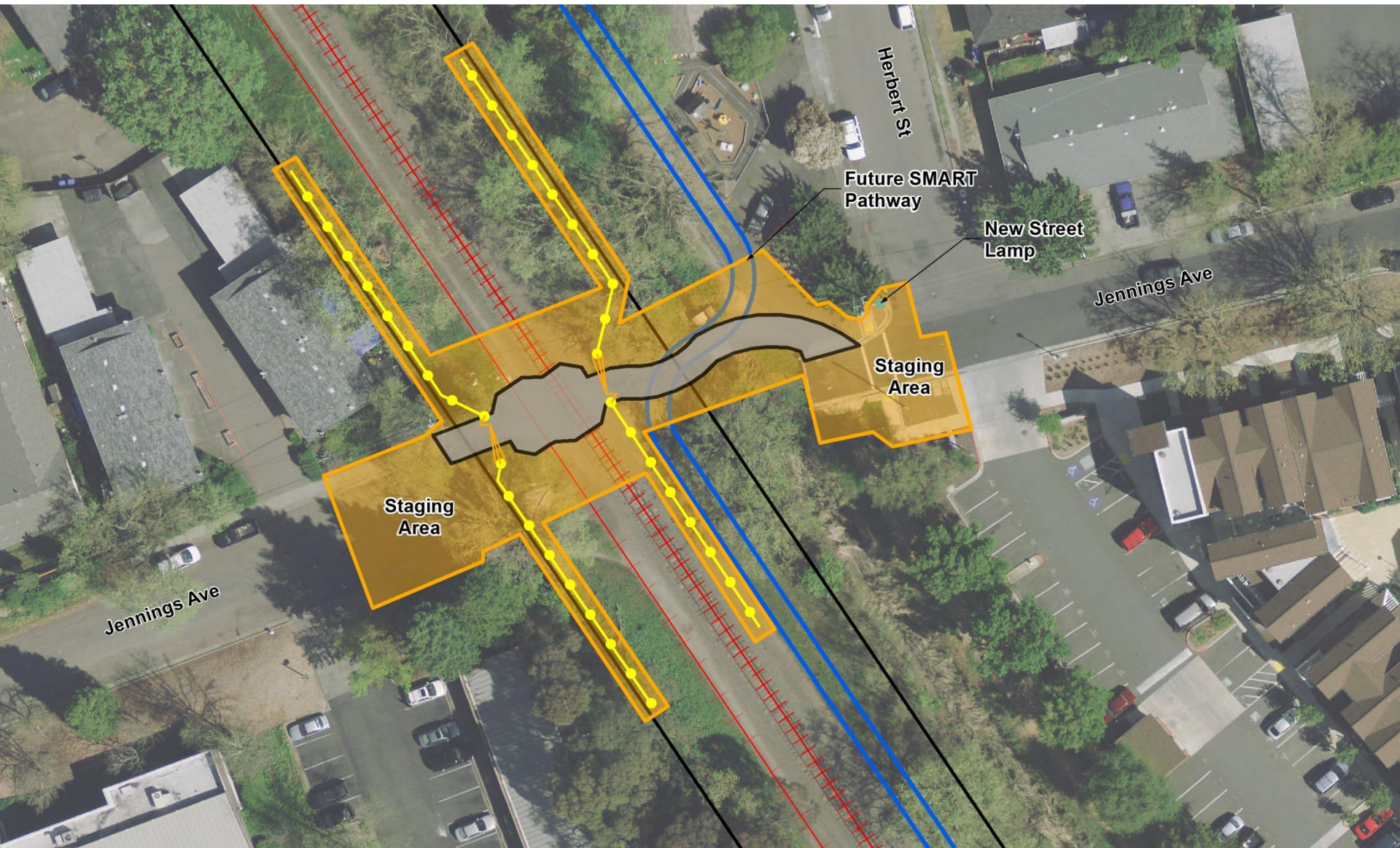
D St

E St

W 3rd St  
Highway 12

# Project Description – Preferred Project

- At-grade pedestrian and bicycle rail crossing at Jennings Avenue:
  - Installation of crossing surfaces, warning devices, pathway improvements, electronic signs, exit swing gates and fencing
- Closure of an existing crossing at W. 6<sup>th</sup>, W. 7<sup>th</sup> or W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street:
  - Removal of existing crossing surfaces and signal components
  - Addition of guard rail and fencing



At-grade crossing footprint and staging area

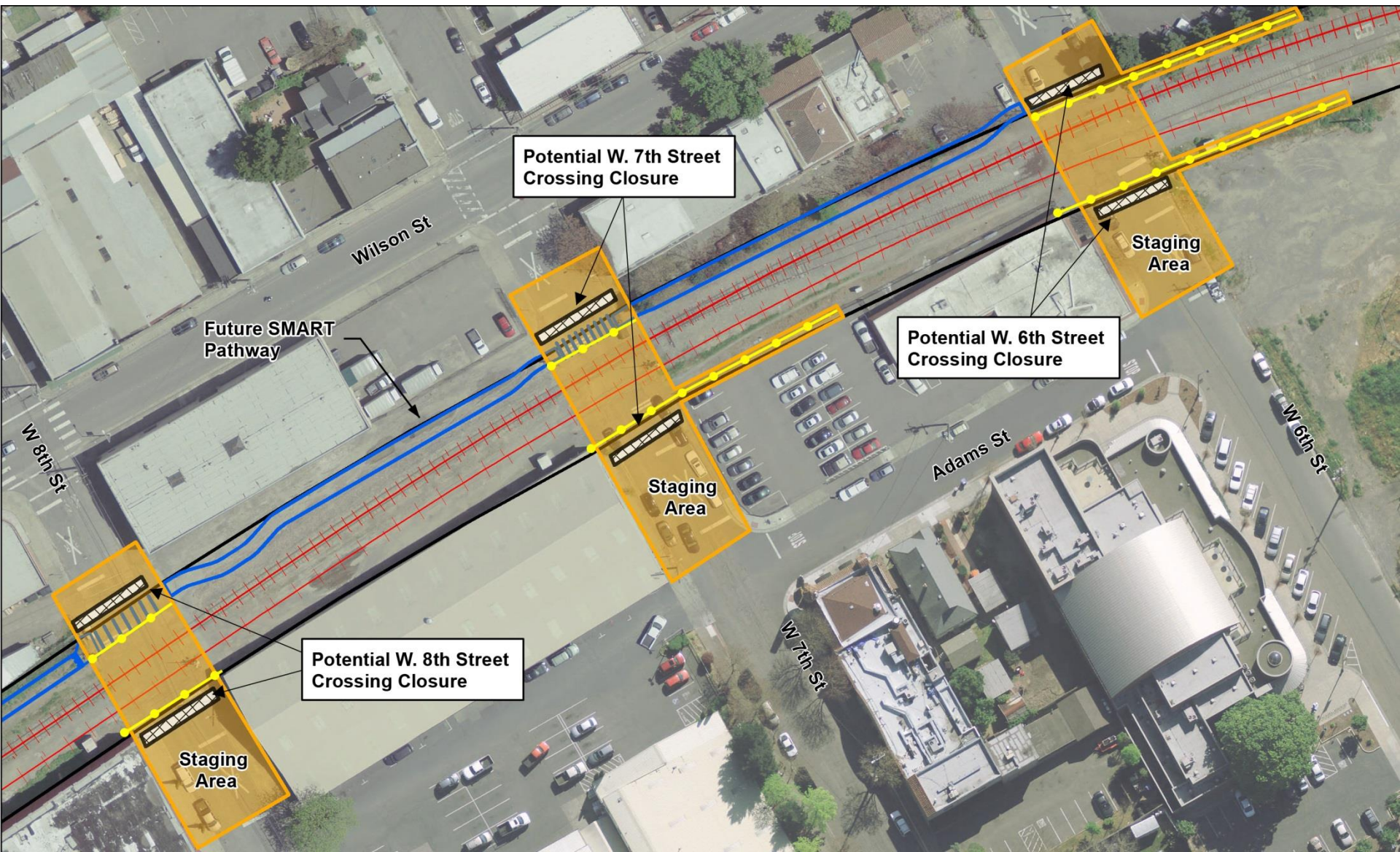




- Existing view from Jennings Avenue looking east



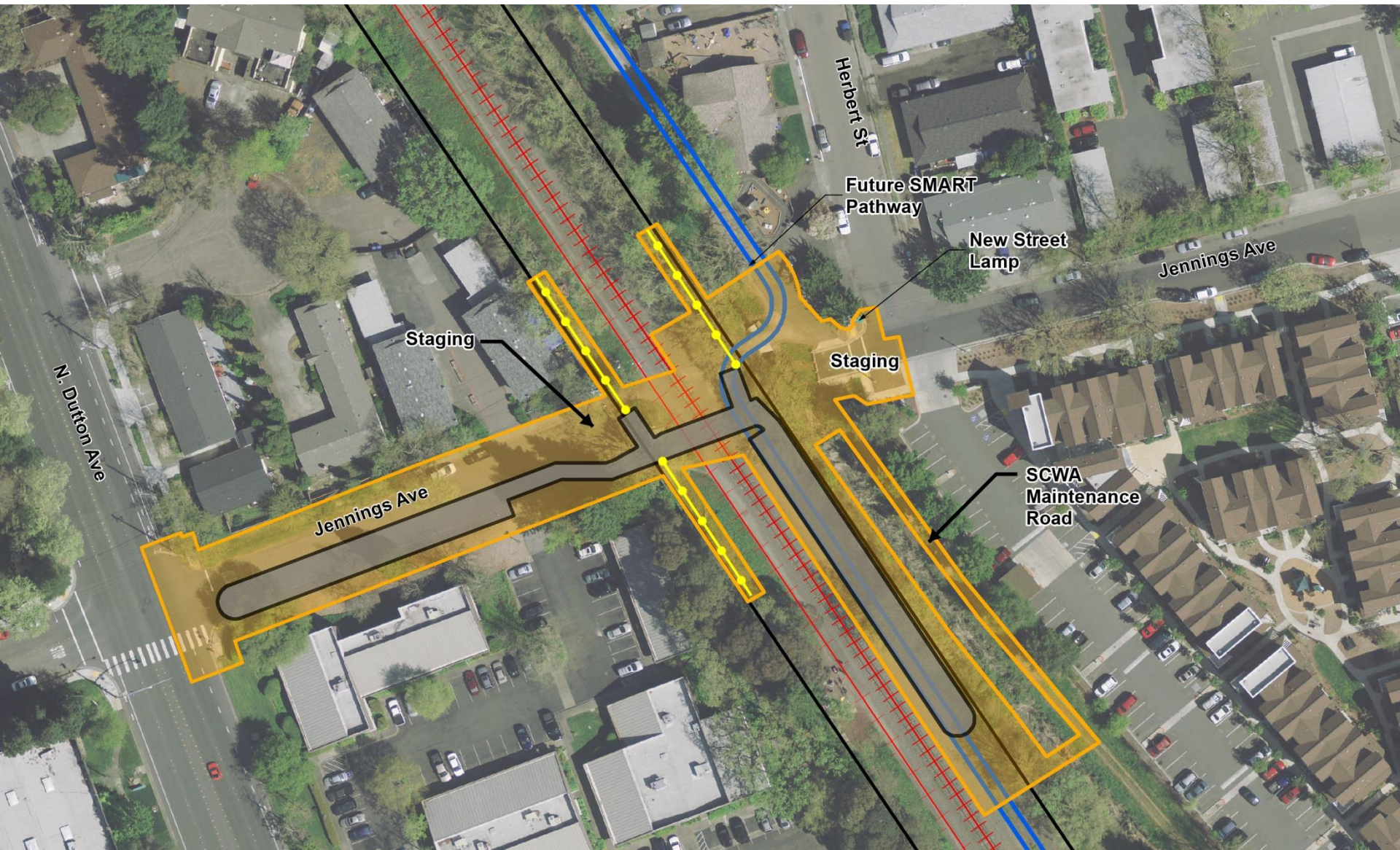
- Visual simulation of at-grade crossing from Jennings Avenue looking east



At-grade crossing alternative locations for closure of one crossing

# Project Description – Alternative

- Grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle rail overcrossing alternative:
  - No street closures required
  - Construction of ramps, stairs and elevated crossing (23 feet of clearance over rail)
  - Ramps – 450 feet long in both directions to obtain clearance and ADA required slopes
  - 17 concrete columns supported by a foundation with four 36-inch diameter drilled piers



Overcrossing footprint and staging area



- Existing view from Jennings Avenue looking east



- Visual simulation of rail overcrossing from Jennings Avenue looking east

# **Environmental Review Process**

## **Council's Role**

- Review the Draft EIR
- Hold a public hearing
- Provide comments on the Draft EIR
- Council will consider certification of the Final EIR and selection of a project in March 2015

# CEQA Overview

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires agencies to identify, evaluate, disclose to the public, and mitigate, to the extent feasible, the significant environmental impacts of proposed projects
- City of Santa Rosa is the lead agency for the Jennings Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing Project Draft EIR
- Final EIR must be certified before a project can be selected

# Draft EIR Presentation Overview

- Noticing and Public Scoping
- Technical Studies and Agency Coordination
- Alternatives and Impacts



# Draft EIR Noticing and Public Scoping

- Notice of Preparation: Nov 12, 2013
- 30-day Scoping Period: Nov 12 – Dec 11, 2013
- Scoping Meeting: Dec 4, 2013

# Draft EIR Technical Studies

- In support of Draft EIR:
  - Traffic
  - Noise
  - Air Quality
  - Biological Resources
  - Historical Resources
  - Archaeological Resources

# Agency Coordination

- City of Santa Rosa
  - Transportation and Public Works Department
  - Community Development
  - Fire and Police Departments
  - Transit Department
  - Utilities Department
- SMART, CPUC, SCWA, utility providers, and others

# Project Alternatives

- Preferred Project and Rail Overcrossing Alternative
- No Project Alternative
- Others
  - Rail undercrossing at Jennings Avenue
  - Closure of a different existing rail crossing
  - At-grade crossing with no closure of an existing crossing
  - Installation of sliding electric gates

# Overview of Impacts

- Significant environmental impacts for both the Preferred Project and the Rail Overcrossing Alternative
- Most impacts were mitigated to less than significant
- Some impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable

# Significant Unavoidable Impacts – *At-grade Rail Crossing*

- Three (3) significant and unavoidable impacts
- Related to increased noise levels in the Jennings Avenue area due to requiring the sounding of additional freight and passenger train horns

# **Significant Unavoidable Impacts – *Rail Crossing Closure at W. 6<sup>th</sup> or W. 7<sup>th</sup>***

- One (1) significant and unavoidable impact
- Related to conflicting with policies in the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan regarding improving pedestrian, bicycle, and bus transit connections between surrounding areas and the future Downtown SMART station

# Significant Unavoidable Impacts – *Rail Crossing Closure at W. 8<sup>th</sup>*

- Three (3) significant and unavoidable impacts
  1. Conflict with policies in the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan regarding improving connection to the Downtown SMART station
  2. Elimination of a key connection between historic West End Preservation District and potential historic North Railroad District
  3. Elimination of a designated Pedestrian Connector identified in the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan



# Significant Unavoidable Impacts – *Rail Overcrossing Alternative*

- One (1) significant and unavoidable impact
- Related to creation of a strong visual contrast with the existing surrounding area

# Summary of Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

**At-grade Rail  
Crossing  
Noise (3)**

**+**

**Closure at W. 6th  
Land Use (1)**

**OR**

**Closure at W. 7th  
Land Use (1)**

**OR**

**Closure at W. 8th  
Land Use (1)  
Historical (1)  
Transportation (1)**

**Rail Overcrossing  
Aesthetics (1)**

# Next Steps

- Prepare Final EIR (response to comments)
- Council certification of the Final EIR and selection of a project – March 2015

# Recommendation

- Hold a public hearing regarding the Jennings Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing Project Draft EIR