



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Valley Rail Sacramento Extension

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: MARCH 31, 2020 – MAY 15, 2020

DATE: March 31, 2020
TO: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Parties
FROM: San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission
SUBJECT: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Valley Rail Sacramento Extension Project (SCH #2019090306)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC), acting as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Valley Rail Sacramento Extension Project (proposed project).

A. Valley Rail Sacramento Extension Location and Limits

SJRRC is the designated owner, operator, and policy-making body for Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) service, which currently provides commuter rail service between San Jose and Stockton. The existing 86-mile ACE service corridor passes through Santa Clara, Alameda, and San Joaquin Counties, with 10 stations along the route. At the western end of the ACE corridor, ACE operates on an approximately 4-mile segment of track between San Jose and Santa Clara owned and operated by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB, also referred to as Caltrain). North of the Santa Clara Station to Stockton, ACE operates on approximately 82 miles of track owned by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR). ACE operates on portions of UPRR's Coast, Niles, Oakland, and Fresno Subdivisions.

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) is the designated administrator and manager of the San Joaquin passenger rail service, which currently provides intercity rail service between Oakland, Sacramento and Bakersfield. The existing 365-mile San Joaquin service corridor passes through Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Sacramento, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern Counties, with 18 stations along the route. The San Joaquin service provides five daily roundtrips between Oakland and Bakersfield, and two daily roundtrips between Sacramento and Bakersfield. The San Joaquin service operates on UPRR's Fresno Subdivision between Sacramento and Stockton, UPRR's Martinez and Niles Subdivisions between Port Chicago and Oakland, and on BNSF's Stockton and Bakersfield Subdivisions between Port Chicago and Bakersfield.

To enhance commuter and intercity rail service and to promote greater transit connectivity between the Sacramento region, the San Joaquin Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area (Bay Area), SJRRC and SJJPA are jointly proposing to implement ACE and San Joaquin passenger rail service between Stockton and Sacramento with further connections to San Jose, Ceres, and Bakersfield.

The proposed project spans San Joaquin and Sacramento Counties. SJRRC and SJJPA propose to extend ACE and San Joaquin service from Stockton to Sacramento by upgrading tracks within the existing UPRR Sacramento Subdivision right-of-way (ROW), and by constructing six new stations along the alignment.

B. Description of the Valley Rail Sacramento Extension

The proposed rail service extension to Sacramento is anticipated to be implemented no later than 2023. The timing of improvements would depend on the time necessary to obtain all necessary permits and approvals and the construction duration for the specific improvements selected.

The proposed improvements include the construction of six new stations between Stockton and the Natomas area of Sacramento. Each proposed station would be located along the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) alignment Sacramento Subdivision. Stations (including one alternative) and their locations are described below:

- The **Lodi Station** would be constructed along the south side of State Route (SR) 12 just east of the existing UPRR alignment.
- The **Lodi Station South Alternative** would be constructed along the north side of West Harney Lane just east of the UPRR alignment.
- The **North Elk Grove Station** would be constructed beneath the Cosumnes Boulevard/Morrison Creek viaduct near the existing Sacramento Regional Transit (SacRT) Franklin light rail transit (LRT) station in Sacramento. There are two platform variants and two station access variants under consideration.
- The **City College Station** would be constructed adjacent to the existing SacRT City College LRT station north of Sutterville Road in Sacramento.
- The **Midtown Sacramento Station** would be constructed near Q Street between 19th Street and 20th Street in Sacramento.
- The **Old North Sacramento Station** would be constructed along the west side of Acoma Street just north of El Monte Avenue in Sacramento.
- The **Natomas/Sacramento Airport Station** would be constructed along the east side of Blacktop Road just south of West Elkhorn Boulevard.

The proposed improvements also include track curve reconstructions at four locations, upgrades to existing passing sidings at six locations, construction of new passing siding track in two locations, and construction of a new crossover track in one location. All of the proposed track work would occur in existing UPRR ROW.

With implementation of the proposed project, there would be two new roundtrip San Joaquins operating on the Sacramento Subdivision. One roundtrip would operate between the proposed Natomas/Sacramento Airport Station and the existing Fresno Amtrak Station, and one round trip would operate between the proposed Natomas/Sacramento Airport Station and the existing Bakersfield Amtrak Station.

The proposed project also includes an extension of existing ACE service to the proposed Natomas/Sacramento Airport Station. One existing ACE train would originate at the proposed Natomas/Sacramento Airport Station in the morning and operate to the Stockton Downtown/ACE Station. Once at the Stockton Downtown/ACE Station, the ACE train would operate in the same manner as the existing ACE service to the San Jose Diridon Station. In the afternoon, one existing ACE train would depart the San Jose Diridon Station and operate to the Stockton Downtown/ACE Station, then continue north to terminate at the proposed Natomas/Sacramento Airport Station and layover overnight in the station.

The proposed project also includes service between the proposed Ceres Station (included in the ACE Extension Lathrop to Ceres/Merced project), to the Natomas/Sacramento Airport Station. This service would provide three ACE trips that would originate in Ceres in the morning traveling to Natomas and stored during the day. One of the trains would make a mid-day trip south to Stockton and back. In the afternoon the three ACE trains would return to the Ceres Station.

The proposed project also includes the establishment of shuttle services between the proposed Natomas/Sacramento Airport Station and Sacramento International Airport.

C. Potential Environmental Impacts

The Valley Rail Sacramento Extension would result in overall regional benefits in terms of improving regional connectivity, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Valley Rail Sacramento Extension would result in significant impacts, after mitigation, on agricultural resources, air quality, and construction noise and vibration.

The Valley Rail Sacramento Extension would result in cumulatively considerable and unavoidable impacts, after mitigation, on agricultural resources.

The Valley Rail Sacramento Extension would result in less-than-significant impacts with mitigation on other resource areas: aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gases, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, operational noise and vibration, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems.

Other less than significant impacts are also disclosed in the DEIR.

D. Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Report

Copies of the DEIR and the documents referenced in the DEIR will be available for review at the following location during normal working hours:

- SJRRC offices at 949 East Channel Street, Stockton

Copies of the DEIR are also available for review at the following locations.

- Valley Rail Sacramento Extension website: www.acerail.com and www.sjpa.com
- Cesar Chavez Central Library: 605 N El Dorado Street, Stockton
- Lodi Public Library, 201 W Locust Street, Lodi
- Elk Grove Library, 8900 Elk Grove Boulevard, Elk Grove
- Sacramento Public Library – Martin Luther King Jr. Branch, 7340 24th Street Bypass, Sacramento
- Sacramento Central Library, 828 I Street, Sacramento
- South Natomas Library, 2901 Truxel Road, Sacramento
- North Natomas Library, 4660 Via Ingoglia, Sacramento

Please note that at this time, libraries in San Joaquin County and Sacramento County are closed due to public health and safety concerns regarding the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Please check the project website at www.acerail.com or www.sjipa.com for the most up-to-date information on the availability of the DEIR at local libraries.

E. Open Houses

Please note that SJRRC and SJIPA staff are continuing to monitor developments related to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on a daily basis and participate in frequent updates from local, state, and federal public health agencies and local jurisdictions. Out of concern for public health and safety, there is a possibility that open houses for the Valley Rail Sacramento Extension DEIR will be replaced with an online, virtual open house. Please check the project website at www.acerail.com or www.sjipa.com for the most up-to-date information regarding open houses for the Valley Rail Sacramento Extension DEIR.

SJRRC and SJIPA plans to hold three open houses to receive comments on the DEIR. Written comments may be made on comment cards that will be provided at the open houses. Open houses are tentatively planned to be held on the below dates and locations:

- North Natomas Library
4660 Via Ingoglia, Sacramento, CA 95835
Thursday, April 23, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Midtown Association
1401 21st Street Unit A, Sacramento, CA 95811
Tuesday, April 28, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Laguna Town Hall Reception Hall
3020 Renwick Avenue, Elk Grove, CA 95758
Monday, May 11, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

F. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report

A 45-day public and agency review period pursuant to Section 150105 of the State CEQA Guidelines is scheduled from March 31, 2020 to May 15, 2020. Comments may be made on comment cards provided at the open house or submitted in writing by regular mail or email. Please note that you do not need to attend one of the open houses to comment on the DEIR. Please send comments submitted in writing to:

Email: ace.sacramentoextension@gmail.com

Mail: San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission
Attn: Valley Rail Sacramento Extension Project
949 East Channel Street
Stockton, CA 95202

Comments on the DEIR must be received by the end of the review period, which is **May 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.**