

Notice of Completion and Environmental Document Transmittal—Attachment

Project Title

California High-Speed Rail Project: San Francisco to San Jose Project Section

Project Location, Cross Streets

The proposed San Francisco to San Jose Project Section (Project Section, or project) would follow the existing Caltrain right-of-way through urban areas of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties including the cities and communities of San Francisco, Brisbane, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Millbrae, Burlingame, San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, North Fair Oaks, Atherton, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose. The project would extend from the 4th and King Street Station in San Francisco (lat. 37° 46' 42.61231"N / long. 122° 23' 36.2202"W) to West Alma Avenue in San Jose (lat. 37° 18' 34.65911"N / long. 121° 53' 3.0138"W). The nearest major state highways are Interstate (I-) 80, I-280, I-380, I-880, U.S. Highway (US) 101, State Route (SR) 1, SR 35, SR 82, SR 84, SR 85, SR 87, SR 92, and SR 237.

Project Description

A Statewide Program (Tier 1) Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed in November 2005 as the first phase of a tiered environmental review process for the proposed California High-Speed Rail (HSR) System planned to provide a reliable high-speed electric-powered rail system that links the major metropolitan areas of the state and that delivers predictable and consistent travel times. A further objective is to provide an interface with commercial airports, mass transit, and the highway network and to relieve capacity constraints of the existing transportation system as intercity travel demand in California increases, in a manner sensitive to and protective of California's unique natural resources. A second program-level (Tier 1) EIR/EIS was completed in 2008 focusing on the connection between the San Francisco Bay Area and Central Valley; the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) revised this document under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and completed it in 2012. Based on the program-level EIR/EISs, the Authority selected preferred corridors and station locations to advance for further study.

The San Francisco to San Jose Project Section EIR/EIS is a project-level (Tier 2) EIR/EIS that tiers off the program-level (Tier 1) EIR/EIS documents. It provides project-level information for decision making on this portion of the HSR system.

The Project Section would modernize the rail corridor between San Francisco and San Jose and would provide service between the Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco and the San Jose Diridon Station. Initially, HSR trains would stop at the 4th and King Street Station in San Francisco (an interim HSR station), and once the Transbay Joint Powers Authority completes its Downtown Extension Project, HSR trains would reach the Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco. The Project Section consists of five geographic subsections:

- San Francisco to South San Francisco—from the 4th and King Street Station in San Francisco to Linden Avenue in South San Francisco
- San Bruno to San Mateo—from Linden Avenue in South San Francisco to Ninth Avenue in San Mateo
- San Mateo to Palo Alto—from Ninth Avenue in San Mateo to San Antonio Road in Palo Alto

- Mountain View to Santa Clara—from San Antonio Road in Palo Alto to Scott Boulevard in Santa Clara
- San Jose Diridon Station Approach—from Scott Boulevard in Santa Clara to West Alma Avenue in San Jose

In 2012, Caltrain, the Authority, and other regional partners agreed to electrify the existing Caltrain corridor, have the two rail systems share the tracks, and maintain the corridor as primarily a two-track railroad. The Project Section would primarily follow the existing Caltrain right-of-way through urban areas in San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties including the cities and communities of San Francisco, Brisbane, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Millbrae, Burlingame, San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, North Fair Oaks, Atherton, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose.

The Project Section includes approximately 43 to 49 miles of blended¹ system infrastructure with Caltrain and up to 6 miles of dedicated HSR infrastructure (depending on the alternative and viaduct option). Stations providing HSR service would be located in San Francisco, Millbrae, and San Jose and a light maintenance facility (LMF) would be built either east or west of the Caltrain corridor in the City of Brisbane. An LMF is where trains are cleaned, serviced, and stored so they can be dispatched to HSR terminal stations at the start of the day.

The Draft EIR/EIS evaluated the impacts and benefits of the No Project Alternative and two project alternatives (Alternative A and Alternative B). Each alternative includes HSR stations in San Francisco, Millbrae and San Jose, and an LMF in Brisbane. The Authority's Preferred Alternative under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which serves as the proposed project under CEQA, is Alternative A, a predominantly two-track blended system with no additional passing track that includes service at one future station (Salesforce Transit Center, which would serve as an HSR station when the Transbay Joint Powers Authority completes its Downtown Extension Project), three existing Caltrain stations to be shared by HSR and Caltrain (4th and King Street [an interim HSR station only], Millbrae, and San Jose Diridon), and the East Brisbane LMF. Alternative B is similar to Alternative A, but includes a 6-mile-long, four-track passing track between San Mateo and Redwood City, the West Brisbane LMF, and an aerial viaduct approaching the San Jose Diridon Station.

Following the Authority's publication of the Draft EIR/EIS in July 2020, the Authority is now issuing a limited revision to the published Draft EIR/EIS, entitled *San Francisco to San Jose Project Section Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS). Pursuant to Section 15088.5, subdivisions (c) and (f)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines, this document is limited to the portions of the previously published Draft EIR/EIS that require revision. Information that has not been revised, including the methods for evaluating impacts under NEPA and the methods for determining significance under CEQA, as well as appendices that remain unchanged, can be found in the previously published Draft EIR/EIS, which is available on the Authority's website (www.hsr.ca.gov). The Authority requests that reviewers limit the scope of their comments to the revised information within the Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS.

This Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS has been prepared and is being made available pursuant to both CEQA and NEPA and presents a new biological resources analysis for monarch butterfly and an analysis of a design variant for the Millbrae Station, neither of which were included in the Draft EIR/EIS.

Biological Resources—New Special-Status Species

Following the Authority's publication of the Draft EIR/EIS in July 2020, the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) became a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) on December 15, 2020 (85 *Federal Register* 81813, December 17, 2020). This action by

¹ *Blended* refers to operating the HSR trains with existing intercity and commuter and regional rail trains on common infrastructure.

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service makes monarch butterfly subject to the definition of special-status species used by the Authority for analysis: “Plants or wildlife listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under FESA (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.)”.

Monarch butterfly is assumed to be present in the resource study area for the project alternatives, based on historical records and existence of suitable habitat for the species. As this is a new potential impact not included in the Draft EIR/EIS, the Authority determined that the analysis of this impact should be included in a recirculated document. Accordingly, Section 3.7, Biological and Aquatic Resources, of the Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS includes additional analysis and revised and new mitigation measures related to the monarch butterfly.

Millbrae Station Reduced Site Plan Design Variant

The Authority developed the Millbrae Station Reduced Site Plan Design Variant (RSP Design Variant) to address stakeholder concerns by analyzing a smaller, potentially feasible footprint for the station design at this location. The RSP Design Variant preserves HSR track and platform right-of-way needs but reconfigures station facilities, parking, and station access to reduce impacts on existing and planned development. The RSP Design Variant differs from the design of the Millbrae Station evaluated in the Draft EIR/EIS (Millbrae Station Design) by: eliminating surface parking lots on the west side of the alignment that would have served as replacement parking for displaced Caltrain and Bay Area Rapid Transit parking spaces; relocating the HSR station entrance hall; eliminating lane modifications to El Camino Real; and eliminating the California Drive extension north of Linden Avenue to El Camino Real from the project. The RSP Design Variant would apply equally to either project alternative—Alternative A or Alternative B. Because the RSP Design Variant is a potentially feasible alternative different from the Millbrae Station Design that would lessen some significant environmental impacts of the project, the Authority determined that the analysis of the RSP Design Variant should be included in a recirculated document. Accordingly, Section 3.20, Millbrae Station Reduced Site Plan Design Variant, in the Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS evaluates the environmental impacts of the RSP Design Variant.

Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Consistent with the guidance provided under CEQA and NEPA,² the Authority, as lead CEQA and NEPA agency for the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section, is issuing the Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS limited to the portions of the Draft EIR/EIS that require revision based on the new information described above. New information in the Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS includes background information, a description of the RSP Design Variant, methodology, impact analysis, and mitigation measures.

To the extent practicable, a vertical line in the margin indicates a substantive change in the text since publication of the Draft EIR/EIS; minor editorial changes and clarifications are not identified. The Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS consists of excerpted text where updates or additions related to monarch butterfly have been made within Section 3.7 and Section 3.18. In these sections, ellipses are used to identify where text from the Draft EIR/EIS remains unchanged and, therefore, is not included in the Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS. The Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS also includes a new Section 3.20 that evaluates the environmental impacts of the RSP Design Variant; this section presents new information not included in the Draft EIR/EIS. All tables in the Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS present information related to the new or updated analysis. The sections and appendices comprising the Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS are:

² CEQA Guidelines, Section 15088.5; 40 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Section 1502.9(c)(1)(ii) (1978). The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued new regulations, effective September 14, 2020, updating the NEPA implementing procedures at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. However, because this project initiated the NEPA process before September 14, 2020, it is not subject to the new regulations. The Authority is relying on the regulations as they existed prior to September 14, 2020. Therefore, all citations to CEQ regulations in this document refer to the 1978 regulations, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. Section 1506.13 (2020) and the preamble at 85 *Federal Register* 43340.

- Section 3.7, Biological and Aquatic Resources
- Section 3.18, Cumulative Impacts
- Section 3.20, Millbrae Station Reduced Site Plan Design Variant
- Chapter 12, References
- Appendix 3.7-A, Special-Status Species Potentially Affected
- Appendix 3.7-B, Scientific Nomenclature

Reviewing Agencies Checklist—Other

California Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency, Secretary, Sacramento, CA
California Environmental Protection Agency, Secretary for Environmental Protection, Sacramento, CA
California Geological Survey
California Health and Human Services Agency
California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development
California State Transportation Agency, Secretary, Sacramento, CA
California Transportation Commission, Executive Director, Sacramento, CA
California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, Mather, CA