

# REGIONAL TRANSIT ISSUE PAPER

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
10	08/22/11	Open	Information	08/10/11

Subject: Blue Line to Cosumnes River College Update

## ISSUE

Update for the Blue Line to Cosumnes River College Light Rail Project.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

Information

## FISCAL IMPACT

None

## DISCUSSION

The Blue Line to Cosumnes River College project (Project), also known as the South Sacramento Corridor Phase 2 project, will extend Sacramento Regional Transit District's (RT's) light rail service from its existing terminus at Meadowview Road south and east 4.3 miles to Cosumnes River College (CRC). The extension will link the South Corridor, the fastest growing portion of Sacramento County, with Downtown, the northeast Sacramento corridor and Rancho Cordova or Folsom in the east corridor. The project includes four stations located at Morrison Creek, Franklin Boulevard, Center Parkway, and Cosumnes River College. The estimated Project cost is \$270 million.

The Project received an overall "Medium" rating in the FY12 New Starts Report, allowing RT to apply for entry into Final Design. Prior to submitting a request to enter into Final Design, RT must complete additional environmental work to address proposed Project modifications.

The Project was originally evaluated by FTA and RT in a Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Final Environmental Impact Report (SFEIS/SFEIR). The SFEIS/SFEIR was approved in December 2008 through the issuance of a Record of Decision by FTA and the filing of a Notice of Determination with the State of California by RT.

RT's proposed modifications to the previously approved Project require further environmental evaluation in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). RT's consultants, working closely with RT and FTA, have prepared an environmental document that represents a joint Environmental Assessment (EA), prepared pursuant to NEPA, and an Initial Study (IS), prepared pursuant to CEQA. The modifications analyzed in the EA and IS include the relocation of a traction power substation, adjustments to the track alignment to comply with the City's General Plan setback requirements for structures near levees, extension of the storage tracks at the Cosumnes River College campus, adjustments of the light rail track alignment westward to meet the Union Pacific

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Approved:

Presented:

Final 8/12/11

General Manager/CEO

AGM, Engineering and Construction

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Railroad's (UPRR) new safety standards, and adjustments to the PG&E gas pipeline/light rail track alignment to allow for maintenance and inspection activities.

The one modification that has taken additional time to address is the PG&E/light rail track alignment. The original design called for the pipeline to be relocated within the entire length of Detroit Boulevard. As a result of feedback received at the April 13, 2011 Detroit Boulevard Neighborhood Association meeting, RT staff is working with PG&E staff to provide an alternative design of the track alignment to allow the gas line to remain in its current location within the UPRR corridor. The IS/EA describes the work necessary to keep the gas line within the UPRR corridor, which includes the construction of a subsurface retaining wall (soldier pile and lagging) to allow the tracks to remain in service if the need to replace/repair the pipeline arose. PG&E has agreed to the proposed modifications in concept, but the details of this proposed modification have not been finalized. RT staff continues to work with PG&E staff.

The focus of the joint IS/EA is to determine whether the proposed project modifications being advanced by RT have significant environmental consequences. If FTA determines that there are no significant environmental impacts as a result of the proposed project modifications, a federal Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) would be issued. Similarly, RT would approve an equivalent State Negative Declaration of significant environmental impacts. These findings would then enable RT to move forward with the submission of a request for entry into Final Design to the FTA.

The IS/EA was released for public review and comment on August 2, 2011. A public meeting was held on August 15, 2011 to provide additional information to the public and answer any questions on the IS/EA. Following the close of the 30-day comment period for the IS/EA, RT's consultant will prepare a final IS/EA for RT and FTA review. Staff will return to the RT Board to adopt the IS on September 12, 2011. Thirty days after the Board adopts the IS, FTA is expected to sign the FONSI, which completes the EA process. The expected timeline for completion of the IS/EA activities was originally 7 to 8 months. The current schedule will extend the completion to about 11 months.

Following the issuance of the FONSI, RT will immediately seek permission from FTA to enter into Final Design. Staff hopes to receive FTA approval of entry into Final Design by early November 2011. There are two particular analyses that FTA expects to complete prior to the approval to enter final design: Risk Assessment and Financial Capacity Assessment. Staff has requested that the FTA start those reviews sooner rather than later to avoid delay in granting entry into Final Design.

On July 11, 2011, staff submitted a request for a Letter of No Prejudice (LONP) for the parking structure at the Cosumnes River College station that Los Rios Community College District will construct. The LONP would allow RT to use non-New starts funds to fund the LONP work, while preserving RT's ability to claim these monies as matching funds once the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) has been approved. Approval of the LONP could eventually lead to

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a cost savings of about \$6 million to the project. Staff also plans to submit a LONP for the construction of the two aerial structures (Morrison Creek and Cosumnes River Boulevard).

Receipt of a LONP for the aerial structures will allow RT to take full advantage of the 2012 construction season for the Morrison Creek Bridge. The construction of the Morrison Creek Bridge is limited to the window between May and October due to the existence of Giant Garter snake habitat within close proximity to the construction zone. Missing the 2012 window will result in construction of the bridge extending until fall 2013. A LONP to bid both structures at the same time will result in an estimated cost savings of \$1 million to the Project.

Based upon the anticipated completion of the activities associated with the IS/EA and the FTA approval process, staff has re-evaluated the Project schedule. Based upon the current information, the FFGA is now expected to slip to July 2012. The overall Project also anticipates that the Revenue Operations Date will slip to June 2015. However, any delays associated with receiving approval for entry into Final Design and the approval of the FFGA could further impact the revenue operations date.

A detailed review of the cost estimate is currently underway and initial indications are that the six-month slip in the revenue operations date will not impact the Project cost estimate of \$270 million.