

# REGIONAL TRANSIT ISSUE PAPER

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
10	03/23/15	Open	Information	03/17/15

Subject: Board Update on the Green Line to the Airport Project

## ISSUE

This is an update to the Board for completing the Green Line to the Airport project environmental documentation and advancing its design.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

No action is required at this time. The Sacramento Regional Transit District Board will be engaged in the review of segments of the Green Line during specific environmental activities as the lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) clearance as the project moves forward. Staff will return to the Board to request formal environmental action(s) at the time said action(s) are required.

## FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time.

## DISCUSSION

The Green Line is a proposed light rail transit line identified in Regional Transit's (RT's) long range plans, the Sacramento Area Council of Government's (SACOG's) Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the City of Sacramento's General Plan. The Green Line would operate between downtown Sacramento and the Sacramento International Airport via the Sacramento Valley Station (SVS)/Railyards, North 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Township 9, a new crossing of the American River to Truxel Road, north on Truxel to approximately Del Paso Boulevard, then west along Commerce Way and Meister Way, crossing SR99 to the future Greenbriar and Metro Air Park developments, and ultimately to the Sacramento International Airport at Terminal B.

A "Locally Preferred Alternative" (LPA) for the Green Line was adopted in 2003 and reaffirmed in 2010. Environmental analyses are now beginning and focused alignment sub-options will be studied as alternatives in the environmental process. Actual decisions on any changes to the adopted LPA would occur *after* the completion of the environmental process in the 2016 to 2018 time frame depending upon the segment. Attachment 1 illustrates the LPA.

## **History and Project Overview**

The approximate distance of the Green Line from Downtown to the Sacramento International Airport is 13.1 miles and about 11.3 miles from the current Green Line terminus at Richards Boulevard. In 2010, the capital cost of the line was estimated to be \$756M. The system would include a rail fleet of 29 vehicles (including four spares) operating with 15-minute peak and 30-minute off-peak headways, seven days a week. A minimum of 10 stations including seven with park-and-ride lots at: El Camino, Pebblestone, San Juan, Gateway, Sleep Train Arena, East Town

Approved:

Presented:

Final 03/17/15

General Manager/CEO

Director, Long Range Planning

J:\Board Meeting Documents\2015\06 March 23, 2015\20150323 Green Line Issue Paper final V2.doc

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
10	03/23/15	Open	Information	03/17/15

Subject: Board Update on the Green Line to the Airport Project

Center, and Country Club were initially envisioned. Daily boardings were estimated to be in excess of 45,000 in the year 2035.

RT has had an on-going effort in the development of the Green Line project since the early 1990's. RT's original Systems Planning Study, completed in 1992, identified the corridor as a candidate for future transit expansion. In the early 2000's, a federal Alternatives Analysis (AA) effort was completed. The early screening steps of the AA evaluated 27 alternatives and seven alignment alternatives varying from No Build to Hi-Bus to Light Rail options along the I-5, Truxel, Northgate and Western Area Power Administration corridors with the goal of connecting Downtown and the Sacramento International Airport with a high-level of transit service. In 2003, the RT Board adopted a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) which identified light rail as the preferred mode of transit service and a corridor that generally followed Truxel Road as the preferred alignment.

As the Natomas area was developing in the 1990's and early 2000's, RT worked with the City and County to identify rights-of-way for preservation along the LPA corridor. The result is a corridor generally on the west side of Truxel extending from Truxel/I-80 north and west to SR99 that has been preserved via Irrevocable Offers of Dedication (IODs) for the LRT alignment.

Between 2003 and 2008, an Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (ADEIS/EIR) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was prepared and reviewed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The ADEIS/EIR was not released to the public. As a result, the focus of project development shifted to environmental clearance of the project under CEQA. A *program-level* EIR for the entire corridor and a *project-level* EIR for the first segment of the Green Line from downtown to Township 9 via North Seventh Street were prepared. Acting as the Lead Agency for CEQA, the RT Board approved both documents in April 2008 and April 2009, respectively. The initial segment of the Green Line was constructed using non-federal funds and opened for revenue service in June 2012.

In 2010, a Transitional Analysis (TA) was completed for the Green Line to the Airport project. The TA re-evaluated the LPA alignment assessing the project's ability to meet the federal New Starts criteria with updated capital and operating designs and costs, as well as engaging the community for input on the stations, designs and other matters. The TA, completed and adopted by the RT Board in late 2010, reaffirmed the selection of the LPA alignment and light rail mode as a cost effective investment capable of meeting the federal New Starts criteria in place at that time. The Board also affirmed a financing strategy, and new design elements including the rail placement on Truxel, the deferring of several stations and requested further study on the design concept for crossing I-80 over Gateway Park Blvd. The Board also considered design strategies for crossing the American River that remained focused on accommodating LRT, bicycle and pedestrian modes (no autos).

RT Staff met with FTA Staff multiple times between 2010 and 2013 and the RT Board authorized the release of a Request for Proposals for re-starting the Green Line to the Airport environmental

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
10	03/23/15	Open	Information	03/17/15

Subject: Board Update on the Green Line to the Airport Project

analysis and advanced design. RT received multiple proposals and the international consulting firm AECOM was selected. The RT Board approved the contract with AECOM in late 2013 and the consultant team began work in November 2013. The goal of the effort underway now is to advance the environmental clearance for the entire Green Line corridor and complete the environmental process for several segments as described in the following sections.

### Key Components of the Green Line Project

While the LPA was adopted in 2003 and much of the corridor alignment has been reserved via IODs, a number of circumstances have changed that have potential to enhance the implementation of the Green Line project and better serve the needs of the Sacramento community.

Environmental analyses are now beginning and focused alignment sub-options will be studied as alternatives in the environmental process. Actual decisions on any changes to the adopted LPA would occur *after* the completion of the environmental process in the 2016 to 2018 time frame depending upon the segment.

### Green Line Segments Environmental Documents and Alternatives

In response to the different schedules, levels of environmental clearance necessary, and funding opportunities, three (3) environmental documents are proposed to be prepared, rather than the one document that was anticipated when the RT Board approved the current effort underway.

#### 1. Sacramento Valley Station Segment

The Sacramento Valley Station (SVS) segment extends through the SVS from 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Streets at H Street, west on H Street, north on a 4<sup>th</sup> Street alignment and east on (future) F Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street. This segment of the Green Line is generally referred to as the “SVS Loop.” This project is consistent with the Board-adopted LPA and is also necessary to accommodate the long-term Downtown-Riverfront Streetcar operational requirements that would utilize the existing Gold Line SVS tracks and station. Attachment 2 illustrates the Sacramento Valley Station “Loop” components.

The estimated cost of the “SVS Loop” is approximately \$40M of which 50% would be paid for by Proposition 1A High Speed Rail Interconnectivity funding. Funding for the remaining 50% is uncertain with options such as Cap & Trade and private funding being explored; federal funding is unlikely. Building upon previous environmental clearances by the City of Sacramento for the Depot work, it is anticipated that an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) would be required to fulfill CEQA. Discussions with FTA have concluded that should federal funding become available, the IS/MND can be used as the basis for a federal Categorical Exclusion of the project for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) purposes.

At this time, the environmental clearance will be for a double-track segment and full station, although construction may involve only a single track in the near-term. On H Street, two double tracking alternatives are being evaluated – utilizing the existing track plus a second track on the north side or the existing track plus a second track on the south side. A Railroad Avenue Station on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, south of North B Street, which would serve a potential MLS Soccer Stadium on the

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
10	03/23/15	Open	Information	03/17/15

Subject: Board Update on the Green Line to the Airport Project

east side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and/or a potential Health/Food complex on the west side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street is also a part of this project segment. Further, the siting and environmental clearance of relocating the existing SVS tail/storage tracks that would be displaced/required with the start of streetcar service is also a component of this segment’s environmental clearance effort. The relocation of the tail/storage tracks is now under study and is still to be determined.

Key issues include double tracking of H Street between 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street and the identification and environmental clearance of a site for the tail/storage tracks that must be relocated with the streetcar project. Locations within the Railyards adjacent to RR Boulevard and in the River District near Sequoia Pacific are presently being evaluated in terms of their operational and physical feasibility for mid-day storage of LRVs. With regards to the double-tracking of H Street, the key issue is whether the double tracking can occur on the north side or on the south side of the existing single track; each option has challenges that are related to the adjacent developments.

On the north side of H Street, between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, a new Sacramento County Courthouse facility will be constructed in the future. In the summer of 2014, the California Judicial Council approved an expenditure of \$27M for the planning and development of construction drawings for the facility – however construction funding has not been authorized by any entity at this time. The state of California, Administrative Office of the Courts -- Judicial Branch Capital Program, is responsible for the planning, design and construction of the facility. Double tracking to the north would require an encroachment of approximately 14-feet and the new tracks would be located on the existing north-side sidewalk of H Street (requiring the sidewalk to be moved north into the courthouse site). The Administrative Office of the Courts has expressed concern and uncertainty as to whether this “encroachment” would adversely affect the building setback and basement footprints. RT staff has been in on-going discussions with staff from this agency and the formal planning and design of the facility will begin in April 2015.

The Matsui Federal Courthouse is located on the south side of H Street, between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets. Concerns with the implementation of the existing single-track LRT, as well as double tracking have been expressed since “9/11” by the federal courts and judges. Between 2003 and 2006, multiple correspondences were exchanged between RT (Board Chairs and/or GM) and various representatives of the federal courthouse expressing concerns regarding double tracking and transporting explosive materials via an LRV. At the time of the construction of the existing single track, written correspondence stated double tracking would occur to the north. However, some correspondence also seemed to leave the issue open to further study. RT’s consultant AECOM employed the services of a security consultant (Kal Krishnan) to assess the security issues based on interviews with other rail transit providers in similar situations and more-recent GSA/Homeland Security guidance. The “Desktop Risk Assessment” (dated October 24, 2014) prepared by a former/retired Homeland Security senior professional, concluded the offset distances, unlikelihood of an “unnoticed” hijacking of a train of sufficient duration to load the train with explosives, and the fact that a backpack IED explosion would generally be contained within the LRV itself, makes the potential explosive threat to the federal courthouse building minimal. RT and City Staff have met with the U.S. Marshall’s office to discuss the matter. Additional and on-going discussions over the spring of 2015 are anticipated.

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
10	03/23/15	Open	Information	03/17/15

Subject: Board Update on the Green Line to the Airport Project

While no definitive position has been stated by the federal courts at this time, double tracking to the south would have to meet the following criteria:

- a. The double-tracking could not occur along the curb on the south side of H Street due to security and access requirements into the facility itself;
- b. Double tracking to the south will require additional dialogue with the federal judges to ensure security is not compromised; and
- c. Consideration of the City’s desires for both two-way traffic on H Street and a separate eastbound bicycle lane would require an encroachment into the south side ROW which is a concern to the U.S. Marshall. This might be overcome through elimination of the striped bicycle lane or use of a joint auto/bicycle “sharrow” lane.

While there is no definitive decision, RT Staff have concluded that further discussions with both the federal courthouse management, judges and U.S. Marshall, as well as the state Administrative Office of the Courts, is warranted prior to determining the appropriate location for double tracking on H Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets for the Green Line. At this time, it appears that the north side is the preferred location.

The goal for this segment is to complete the IS/MND by the end of 2015 and obtain RT Board approval of the CEQA document by no later than Spring 2016. RT Staff believe this is an achievable time frame. This matter will be brought back to the RT Board as part of the environmental clearance effort.

**2. Township 9 to W. El Camino Segment Including the American River Bridge Crossing**

This 1.2-mile segment of the Green Line is focused on designing and environmentally clearing a light rail extension plus the American River Bridge Crossing. The alignment extends from the current Green Line terminus at Richards Boulevard westward to Sequoia Pacific, where it turns north and crosses the American River and the Parkway, and ties into Truxel Road at Garden Highway. The northern limits of this segment would be at El Camino Avenue, where the LPA recommends a station and park-and-ride lot. The Board-adopted LPA has the river crossing as a light rail, bike and pedestrian crossing. However, SACOG’s MTP and the City of Sacramento’s General Plan, as well as the City’s American River Bridge Crossing Study completed and adopted by the City Council in 2013, included automobiles on the bridge in addition to light rail, bikes and pedestrians. Attachment 3 illustrates the Township 9 to West El Camino segment including several conceptual design renderings of the American River Bridge Crossing.

The environmental document for this segment will evaluate both alternatives; i.e., without and with automobiles. Since both non-federal and federal funds would likely be utilized for the construction of this segment, both CEQA and NEPA compliance would be necessary. Upon completion of the environmental process, the LPA may or may not be amended based on the results of the analysis and community input.

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
10	03/23/15	Open	Information	03/17/15

Subject: Board Update on the Green Line to the Airport Project

In preparation for this effort, RT organized and met with up to 30 community stakeholders, on three separate occasions, to discuss aesthetics and design considerations for the bridge, irrespective of the modes on the bridge itself. Examples of the conceptual designs discussed with the stakeholders are illustrated in Attachment 3. This information will be used to help define the bridge design for evaluation in the environmental document.

RT is also presently in consultation with Caltrans and the City of Sacramento on preparing a joint-agency request to SACOG for upcoming Regional/Local funding for the Final Design of this segment. Should the request be successful, funding for Final Design could become available following completion of the Final EIS/EIR. The role of Caltrans as a potential funding agency, as well as direct participation by the City of Sacramento, may affect the scope of the environmental analysis. The additional complexity resulting from multiple agency participants, however, would be offset by the additional funding opportunities that become available to complete the bridge project.

Pending no disagreement by the RT Board of this approach of evaluating an additional “all-modes” (i.e. LRT, Pedestrian, Bike and Auto), initiation of the environmental process will commence with formal scoping for the project in the Summer/Fall of 2015. A Draft EIS/EIR could be released in the Fall of 2016 and the Final EIS/EIR is projected for completion by the Winter of 2017.

### 3. West El Camino to North Natomas/SR99 Segment

A third environmental document will be prepared for this segment which extends approximately 10 miles and includes several sub-segments discussed below. A Draft EIS/EIR will be prepared and completed by the Fall of 2016 and, dependent upon securing new funding, a Final EIS/EIR will be prepared by Fall of 2018. Attachment 4 illustrates the potential opportunities for refinements to the LPA between West El Camino and North Natomas/State Route 99 (SR99) as follows:

#### a. Truxel Alignment from W. El Camino to I-80 Sub-Segment

Refinements to the LPA are being considered in this segment as it relates to the location and design of the stations and/or the configuration of the track. The refinements to the LPA, if any, will be based on optimizing rail operations, improving station access and safety, minimizing land acquisition, and providing for safe light rail/automobile operations. These refinements would not include eliminating or adding any stations previously approved by the RT Board.

#### b. Truxel Alignment from I-80 over Gateway Boulevard Sub-Segment

The 2010 Board-adopted LPA had three overhead crossings of the Truxel/Gateway Boulevard intersection in combination with different station locations and required further study – a crossing on the west side of Truxel, south of Gateway, a diagonal crossing of Truxel at the intersection of Gateway and a crossing on the east side of Truxel, north of Gateway. The design and environmental process will screen these three crossings and station locations to a single preferred/recommended concept and environmentally clear that concept. The screening will consider constructability, visual considerations, use of IODs, opportunities to complement future transit-oriented development, and access to existing uses and parking.

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
10	03/23/15	Open	Information	03/17/15

Subject: Board Update on the Green Line to the Airport Project

**c. Sleep Train Arena Complex Sub-Segment**

As illustrated in Attachment 4, the Board-adopted LPA utilizes the right-of-way along the west side of Truxel adjacent to Sleep Train Arena, extends north across Del Paso Road, and then turns west along New Market Drive and continues west past Inderkum High School. With the relocation of the Sacramento Kings to the new Downtown Entertainment and Sports Complex (ESC) now under construction, evaluating the relocation of the Green Line to penetrate and directly serve the potential redevelopment of this 180-acre site is a significant opportunity for the community which did not exist when the LPA was adopted.

Working with the City of Sacramento, RT and its consultants will develop one or more alignment alternatives to optimize this redevelopment opportunity. The environmental document will then clear one or more alternatives based on the planning efforts in collaboration with the City and the subsequent analyses. Initial discussions with the FTA resulted in their recognition that a more-direct alignment would likely generate increased ridership at a lower capital and operating cost compared to the adopted LPA in this sub-segment.

**4. Sacramento International Airport Sub-Segment**

Attachment 5 illustrates the sub-segment from SR 99 to the Sacramento International Airport “campus.” There are two refinements of the Board-adopted LPA assumed and illustrated. First, the original/previously adopted LPA required that the LPA utilize a “dogleg” to swing south near Metro Air Park, parallel I-5, and then turn north to enter the main airport grounds. This “dogleg” added ½-mile to the length of the corridor and was required assuming an extension of the easternmost airport runway to the south. The need for this dogleg was to ensure sufficient vertical clearance for airfield takeoffs and landings.

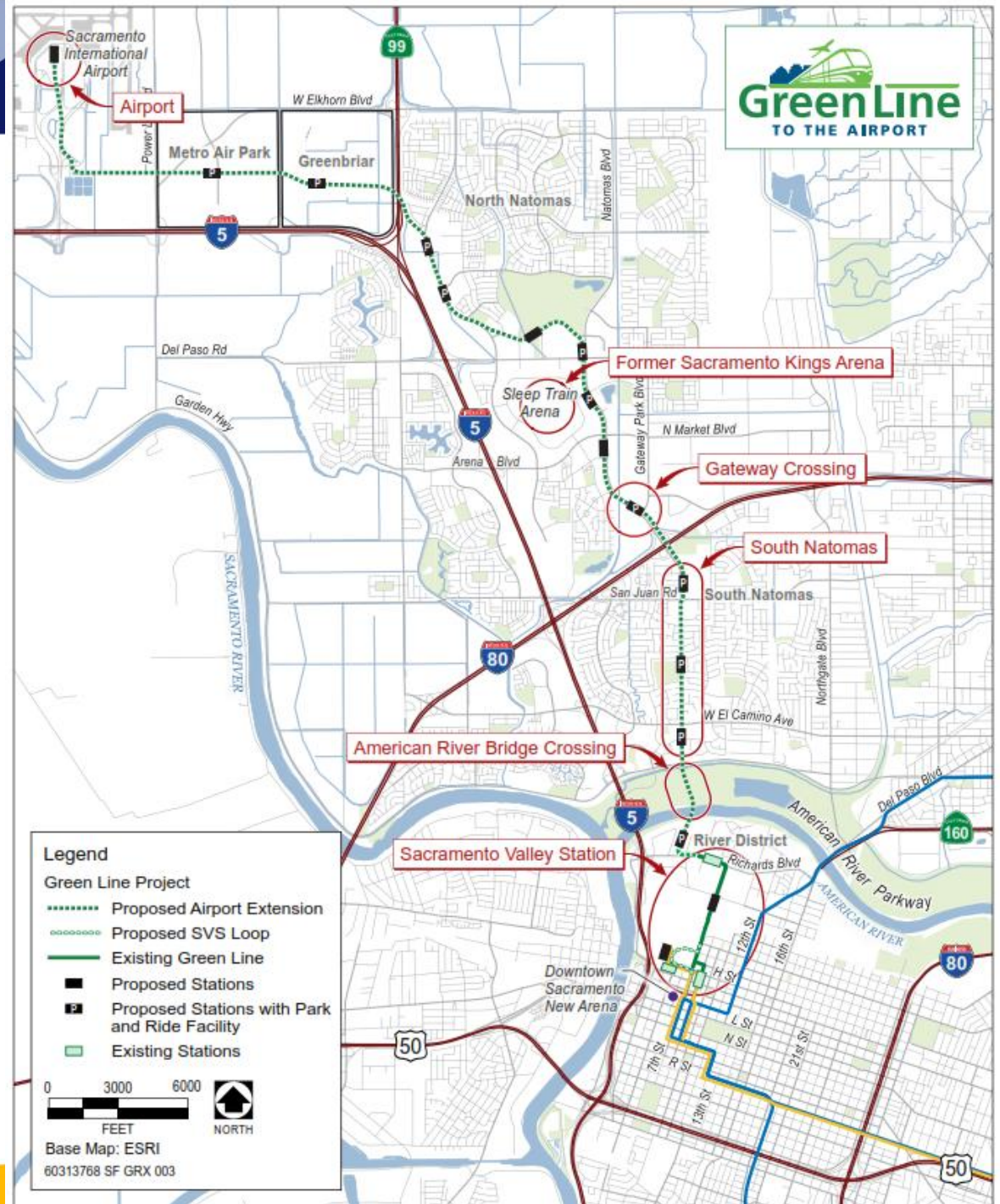
Discussions with Airport Staff and their on-going efforts to update the Airport Master Plan revealed that the assumed extension is no longer necessary. Thus, a straight east-west connection into the airport can be accommodated with some depression of the light rail tracks in the overflight area. Straightening of the “dogleg” will save approximately ½-mile in track and associated infrastructure, thus reducing capital and operating costs.

The second refinement recommended is a terminus station directly adjacent to and elevated at the Terminal B check-in level. The adopted LPA has the terminus station approximately 300 feet away from Terminal B. A direct connection to Terminal B would be more passenger-oriented and consistent with the intent of the Green Line to provide a direct connection to Sacramento International Airport.

**Summary**

The goal of this Issue Paper and proposed Action is to update the RT Board on the Green Line. Environmental analyses are now beginning and focused alignment sub-options will be studied as alternatives in the environmental process. Actual decisions on any changes to the adopted LPA would occur *after* the completion of the environmental process in the 2016 to 2018 time frame depending upon the segment being considered.

# Green Line Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

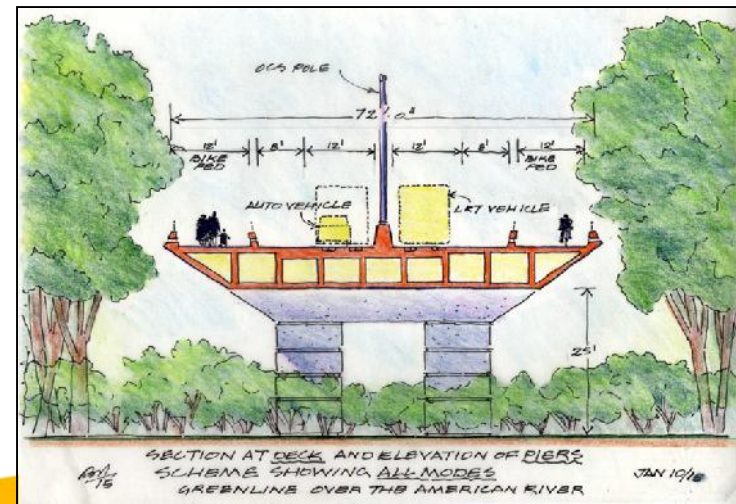
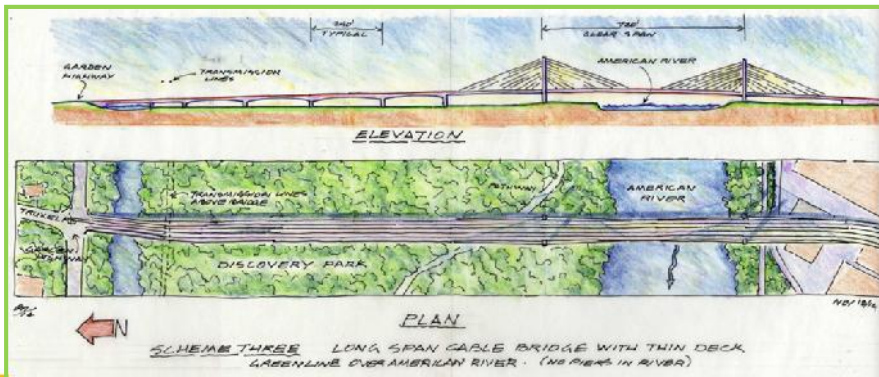
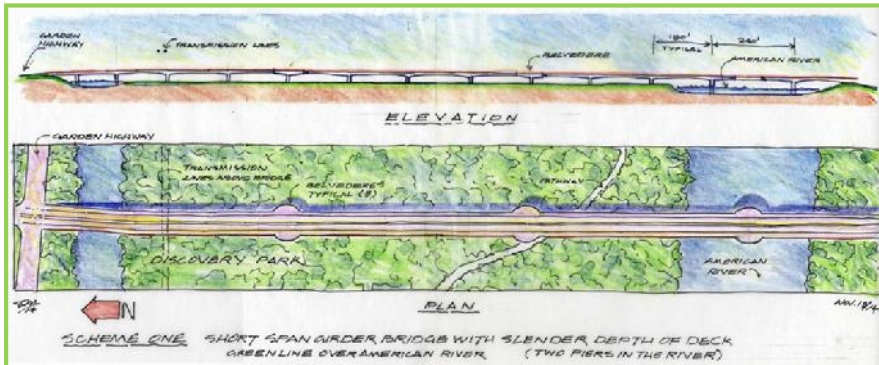




# Sacramento Valley Station (SVS) Area



Attachment 3 – Township 9 to West El Camino



# South Natomas and North Natomas Sub-Segment (West El Camino to SR99)




**Legend**

Green Line Project

- ..... Proposed Airport Extension
- Proposed SVS Loop
- Existing Green Line
- Proposed Stations
- P Proposed Stations with Park and Ride Facility
- Existing Stations

0 2250 4500  
FEET

 NORTH

Base Map: ESRI  
60313768 SF GRX 004 03/11/2015

## State Route 99 to Sacramento International Airport Sub-Segment

