

REGIONAL TRANSIT ISSUE PAPER

| Agenda Item No. | Board Meeting Date | Open/Closed Session | Information/Action Item | Issue Date |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 11 | 03/28/16 | Open | Action | 03/21/16 |

Subject: Release Initial Study and Notice of Intent to set a Public Hearing on April 25, 2016 for the Sacramento Valley Station project

ISSUE

Whether to release the Initial Study and Notice of Intent to set a public hearing for consideration of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Sacramento Valley Station area improvements.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt Resolution 16-03 _____, Releasing the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) and Set a Public Hearing for April 25, 2016 to Receive Comments on the IS/MND for the Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT

None from this action.

DISCUSSION

In support of the Sacramento Valley Station (SVS) area improvements and working with our partners at the City of Sacramento, the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) has prepared an Initial Study (IS) and proposes to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed project improvements in the Sacramento Valley Station area in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 15070).

Background

RT presently serves the SVS with the Gold Line light rail service and with Route 30 bus service. RT also operates the Green Line light rail service on nearby 7th Street, as well as the Blue Line service; however, neither directly serves the SVS. Since the adoption of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) by the RT Board in December 2003 for the Downtown-Natomas-Airport (now Green Line) extension, the SVS Loop concept has been an integral component of RT's and the City of Sacramento's long-term plan for light rail service directly serving the intermodal facility and providing a strong connection between the intercity rail and light rail services. To this end, the RT Board of Directors certified a *program-level* EIR for the Green Line in April of 2008. RT completed construction of the current extension to the Sacramento Intermodal Transfer Facility (now the SVS) in 2006; and completed the Green Line extension to Township 9 in 2012. Over the past 36 months, RT has been working with its partners on the Downtown Sacramento-Riverfront Streetcar Project which will also serve the SVS.

Approved:

Presented:

Final 03/23/16

General Manager/CEO

Director, Long Range Planning

J:\Board Meeting Documents\2016\06 March 28, 2016\2016-03-21 2nd Draft SVS Issue Paper.doc

| Agenda Item No. | Board Meeting Date | Open/Closed Session | Information/Action Item | Issue Date |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 11 | 03/28/16 | Open | Action | 03/21/16 |

Subject: Release Initial Study and Notice of Intent to set a Public Hearing on April 25, 2016 for the Sacramento Valley Station project

Operational analyses conducted for the Streetcar project and the SVS Loop identified the need for double-tracking of H Street, as well as relocation of the existing LRT station on H Street. These improvements are necessary to accommodate the future Streetcar operations on H Street, as well as the future Green Line extension across the American River, north of Township 9.

The Downtown Sacramento-Riverfront Streetcar project is in the President's Budget for funding as a Small Start and received a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in February 2016.

The existing LRT station on H Street was originally designed in a manner to be “temporary” and to be relocated once a more-permanent station had been identified as an element in the on-going SVS master planning effort. In collaboration with the City of Sacramento, the State of California Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and Representative Doris Matsui’s Office, RT has been working on the design of H Street between 7th Street and 4th Street, as well as the placement of the station for the SVS Loop. Attachment 1 illustrates the agreed-to concept and the subject of the IS/MND.

Funding for the construction of this project is intended to be Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funds from the state Cap & Trade program and other local sources. RT will be applying for this round of TIRCP funding in the spring of 2016 with awards announced in the fall of 2016. Towards achieving the goal of constructing the SVS Loop using TIRCP funding and in a timeframe consistent with the Downtown Sacramento-Riverfront Streetcar project, RT has prepared an Initial Study and a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the purposes of environmentally clearing the proposed SVS Loop project under CEQA.

Proposed Project

The proposed project consists of a new station platform, more-direct and closer access to the existing Amtrak/CCJPA/SJJPA intercity boarding platforms, double tracking of light rail from 7th & H Streets through the new platform and then turning east on F Street and reconnecting with 7th Street, and station amenities. The capital cost of this project is projected to be \$45-\$50 million in the year of expenditure dollars. Operational strategies have been evaluated by RT Service Planning and the SVS Loop is projected to be cost-neutral or potentially show a modest cost savings depending upon how trains are interlined and operated once the project is completed.

Attachments 1 and 2 illustrate the project concept and include the following elements that are evaluated in the IS/MND:

- An approximately 0.5-mile-long, double-tracked, light rail transit loop, including track facilities to facilitate Gold Line trains turning back toward Folsom.
- An SVS Station along the transit loop tracks that would be oriented north–south and replace the existing Gold Line Station on H Street across from the Amtrak Depot
- An electric bus charging station at existing RT bus berths on H Street

| Agenda Item No. | Board Meeting Date | Open/Closed Session | Information/Action Item | Issue Date |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 11 | 03/28/16 | Open | Action | 03/21/16 |

Subject: Release Initial Study and Notice of Intent to set a Public Hearing on April 25, 2016 for the Sacramento Valley Station project

- A new Railyards Station on the east side of North 7th Street at Railyards Boulevard (Attachment 2)

RT has prepared an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed project in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. The Initial Study describes the proposed project and provides an assessment of the project’s potential significant adverse impacts on the environment. The Initial Study concludes that the proposed project would not have any significant effects on the environment after implementation of mitigation measures.

The Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is Attachment 2. As described in the MND, the mitigation measures to be incorporated are:

- Biological – preconstruction surveys and establishing construction-free buffer zones for select species as necessary and determined by a qualified biologist
- Cultural – archival research and subservice exploration during the design development phase and pre-construction activities. If resources are identified, they will be field recorded and the data added to the RSHS Historic District DPR 523 forms, following the protocol described in the Unanticipated Discovery Plan (UDP). If research or field investigation confirms the presence of historical or prehistoric archaeological resources that are eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR), and that would be in conflict with project construction, RT will revisit the design to avoid adverse effects to historic properties.
- Noise – During final design, RT will specify that low-impact common crossings (frogs) will be installed at the 7th St and F Street and 7th St and H Street intersection. And during operations, RT will apply rail curve grease at the 7th St and F Street and 7th St and H Street intersections. Applications will be made at sufficient intervals and quantities to minimize wheel squeal during normal operations.

The IS/MND will be made available for a minimum of 30 days in compliance with CEQA beginning with the RT Board release of the Initial Study and Notice of Intent. Attachment 3 is the Notice of Intent to adopt the Negative Declaration for the Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements Project and will be distributed to the adjacent landowners along the project alignment following Board action on March 28, 2016. A public hearing will be held on the April 25, 2016 RT Board meeting for Staff to update the Board on all written comments received and to receive oral comments from the community.

Following closure of the public hearing and the formal comment period on April 29, 2016, Staff will respond to comments received and return to the RT Board on May 23, 2016 to request that the Board act on whether or not to adopt the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (Attachment 4) and whether or not to approve the project to advance it into final design.

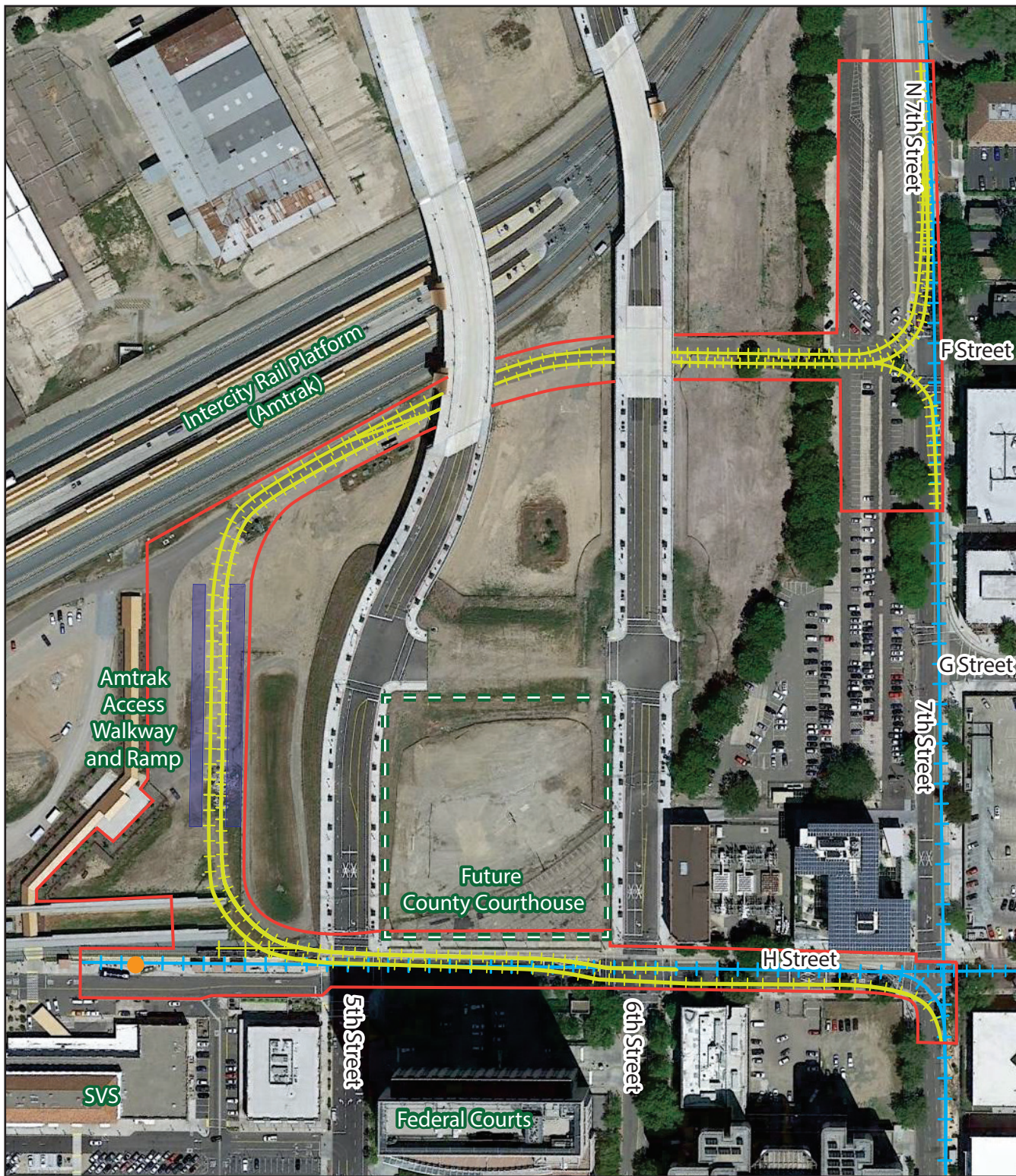
Attachment 5 is a power point presentation highlighting the key elements of the project.

REGIONAL TRANSIT ISSUE PAPER

| Agenda Item No. | Board Meeting Date | Open/Closed Session | Information/Action Item | Issue Date |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 11 | 03/28/16 | Open | Action | 03/21/16 |

Subject: Release Initial Study and Notice of Intent to set a Public Hearing on April 25, 2016 for the Sacramento Valley Station project

Staff recommends that the Board direct staff to release the Notice of Intent and the Initial Study and schedule the public hearing for April 25, 2016. On that date, staff recommends the Board receive testimony on the Initial Study and Negative Declaration, and then close the public hearing. Staff will return on May 23, 2016 with responses to any comments received and will request that the RT Board act on adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration.



Aerial Imagery courtesy of © Google Earth. Imagery Date: 06/17/2015

LEGEND

- New Side Boarding Option
- New Light Rail Tracks
- Existing Light Rail Tracks
- Bus Charging Station
- Disturbance Area

FIGURE 2-1a
Sacramento Valley Station Improvements –
Side-boarding Station Option
 Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements Project
 Sacramento Regional Transit District
 Sacramento, CA



0 225
Approximate scale in feet



LEGEND

- Railyards Station Platform
- Existing Light Rail Tracks
- Disturbance Area

Aerial Imagery courtesy of © Google Earth. Imagery Date: 06/17/2015

FIGURE 2-3
Railyards Station at 7th Street
 Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements Project
 Sacramento Regional Transit District
 Sacramento, CA

Attachment 3

Date: March 29, 2016

To: Interested Organizations and Individuals

Subject: INITIAL STUDY AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY STATION AREA IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

The Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) has prepared an Initial Study (IS) and intends to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the proposed project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines.

Project Title: Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements Project

Lead Agency: Sacramento Regional Transit District

Project Location: The project is located in the vicinity of the Sacramento Valley Station (SVS), in the northwestern portion of Downtown Sacramento. The station is at 401 I Street and currently provides intermodal transportation services including Amtrak intercity rail, Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin Corridor regional rail, local light rail, and various private and public bus services. The project also includes a new Railyards Station, located on the east side of North 7th Street and Railyards Boulevard.

Project Description:

The project includes the following elements that are evaluated in the IS/MND:

- An approximately 0.5-mile-long, double-tracked, light rail transit loop, including track facilities to facilitate Gold Line trains turning back toward Folsom.
- An SVS Station along the transit loop tracks that would be oriented north–south and replace the existing Gold Line Station on H Street across from the Depot
- An electric bus charging station at existing RT bus berths on H Street
- A new Railyards Station on the east side of North 7th Street at Railyards Boulevard

Environmental Review Process: RT has prepared an IS/MND on the proposed project in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. The IS/MND describes the proposed project and provides an assessment of the project's potential significant adverse impacts on the environment. The IS/MND concludes that the proposed project would not have any significant effects on the environment after implementation of mitigation measures. Funding for the project will come from state sources with state and local matching funds.

Public Review Period: The IS/MND is being circulated for public review and comment. Written comments should be submitted and received at the following address no later than close of business (5:00 p.m.) on Friday, April 29, 2016.

Jeffrey P. Damon
Director, Long-Range Planning
Sacramento Regional Transit District
1409 28th Street Sacramento, CA 95812
E-mail: SVSInitialStudy@sacrt.com

To Review or Obtain a Copy of the Environmental Document: Copies of the IS/MND can be reviewed on the RT project website at: www.sacrt.com/planning_construction.

RT Board of Directors Meeting: The RT Board of Directors will consider the MND and the proposed project at a regularly scheduled Board meeting on Monday April 25, 2016, beginning at 6:00pm. The meeting will be held at the RT Auditorium, 1400 29th Street, Sacramento, CA and will be open to the public. Interested persons are encouraged to attend. RT staff will present the proposed project to the Board along with any written comments received, the Board will take and consider public comments on the MND and the project. The Board will then consider whether or not to adopt the MND and to approve the project at the May 23, 2016 Board meeting.

PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project: Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements Project

Lead Agency: Sacramento Regional Transit District

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project includes the following elements:

- An approximately 0.5-mile-long, double-tracked, light rail transit loop, including track facilities to facilitate Gold Line trains turning back toward Folsom
- An SVS Station along the transit loop tracks that would be oriented north–south and replace the existing Gold Line Station on H Street across from the Depot
- An electric bus charging station at existing RT bus berths on H Street
- A new Railyards Station on the east side North 7th Street at Railyards Boulevard

FINDINGS

An Initial Study has been prepared by the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act to ascertain whether the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action will have:

No impact or a less-than significant impact on aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems.

A less-than-significant impact with mitigation on biological resources, cultural resources, and noise, with incorporation of the following mitigation measures (MM):

- MM BIO-1** Preconstruction nesting surveys will be conducted by a qualified biologist before work begins during the nesting season (February 1 through August 31). Any nest found within 50 feet for songbirds and 300 feet for raptors of construction activities will be avoided by establishing a designated construction-free buffer zone around the nests until the nests are no longer active, as determined by a qualified biologist.
- MM BIO-2** Preconstruction surveys for Swainson’s hawks will be conducted by a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved biologist in accordance with the survey protocol outlined by the Swainson’s Hawk Technical Advisory Committee (2000) before work begins. Any individuals found within 0.5 mile of the construction zone will be monitored regularly by a qualified biologist during the breeding season. The avoidance and minimization measures established by CDFW (2010) such as construction-free buffers, reporting requirements, and photographic documentation, as applicable, will be incorporated into the project if the preconstruction surveys determine that Swainson’s hawks are present.
- MM BIO-3** Preconstruction surveys for burrowing owls will be conducted 30 days before work begins by a qualified biologist. If occupied burrows are detected within 300 feet of construction activities, the construction may proceed. However, any occupied burrows found in the project area within 300 feet of construction

activities will be avoided by establishing a designated construction-free buffer zone around the nests until the nests are no longer active, as determined by a qualified biologist.

MM BIO-4

Preconstruction surveys for bats will be conducted by a qualified biologist 30 days before work begins. If day roosts are not detected within 300 feet of construction activities, construction may proceed. However, any day roosts found within 300 feet of construction activities will be avoided by establishing a designated construction-free buffer zone around the roosts until the roosts are no longer active, as determined by a qualified biologist.

MM CUL-1

Additional identification efforts will consist of further archival research and subsurface exploration to avoid impacts on historic properties. As the project design advances, additional archival research will be conducted to help identify specific locations in the disturbance area where contributing elements of the Raised Streets and Hollow Sidewalks (RSHS) Historic District may exist. This research will target those areas of the design that coincide with known or likely below-grade hollow sidewalks or raised street structures. Preconstruction subsurface explorations will be conducted where construction is anticipated to approach the vertical limits of the disturbance area in areas sensitive for prehistoric and historical cultural resources.

RT will also coordinate with the City of Sacramento and property owners to obtain permission to access any remaining hollow sidewalk segments that are identified or suspected to exist in areas that could be affected by construction, particularly installation of overhead catenary system poles. If access is obtained and hollow sidewalks are present, the potentially affected hollow sidewalk segment(s) will be field recorded and the data collected will be added to the existing RSHS Historic District DPR 523 form, following the protocol described in an Unanticipated Discovery Plan (UDP) (see MM CUL-4). This recordation will capture data about the hollow sidewalks and raised streets that are not readily available and improve access to information about these historical resources. If access cannot be obtained, RT will use ground-penetrating radar or other means to confirm the presence or absence of hollow sidewalk segments in the construction footprint.

Should hollow sidewalks be identified in areas where OCS poles could potentially be installed, avoidance options will be implemented. These options include modifying the proposed OCS pole locations, modifying the pole foundation type, using a building attachment, or attaching span or pull-off wires to a backbone wire between two other poles or structures. The attachment of wires to adjacent buildings may require modification of the disturbance area to accommodate those buildings. No historical structures would be selected for wire attachment.

Furthermore, if research or field investigation confirms the presence of historical or prehistoric archaeological resources that are eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR), and that would be in conflict with project construction, RT will revisit the design to avoid adverse effects to historic properties.

MM CUL-2

All ground-disturbing activities will be monitored by a qualified archaeologist and, when appropriate, a Native American representative of any tribe that has been determined a consulting party to the project. If any prehistoric or historical-era resources are exposed during construction,

work will stop in the immediate vicinity and be redirected to allow for recordation, including photography, measurements, and GIS data. Field recordation data will be added to the existing RSHS Historic District DPR 523 form.

Monitors will be responsible for working with construction personnel and identifying cultural resources that may be uncovered during ground disturbance. If unanticipated cultural materials are unearthed, the monitor will have the authority to immediately halt work to allow the onsite archaeological monitor to inspect and assess the materials, determine whether additional analysis of the find is warranted, and whether construction can proceed without further analysis.

MM CUL-3

If cultural resources not identified by research or other investigations during the pre-construction period are inadvertently exposed during project construction, work will stop or be redirected within 50 feet of the find to allow for recordation, including photography, measurements, and GIS data in accordance with the UDP (see MM CUL 4).

If previously unidentified hollow sidewalk features or raised street structures are exposed, the field recordation data collected (e.g., photography, field measurements, and GIS data) will be added to the existing RSHS District DPR 523 form (Downey, 2010). This recordation will follow the protocol for treating cultural resources identified as inadvertent discoveries described in the UDP for the project. The UDP will describe treatment for prehistoric and below-grade historical-era resources, including all elements that contribute to the RSHS Historic District.

MM CUL-4

The UDP will be developed prior to the initiation of construction. The UDP will provide detailed descriptions of protection and mitigation measures for archaeological resources in the disturbance area. The UDP will include guidelines for the following:

- Avoidance of historical properties and establishment of environmentally sensitive areas
- Data recovery guidelines for known historical properties and resources that cannot be avoided by project design
- Protocols for treating cultural resources identified during preconstruction subsurface explorations, monitoring activities, and unanticipated discoveries, including human remains
- Monitoring during construction
- Responsibilities and coordination with Native American tribes and individuals
- Curation of recovered materials

The UDP will address treatment for prehistoric resources, including human remains, and historical-era resources, including all elements that contribute to the RSHS Historical District. All activities outlined in the UDP will be conducted under the direction of individuals who meet the professional qualification standards in Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guideline (Federal Register, Volume 48, No. 190, September 29, 1983).

As project design progresses, all efforts will be made to avoid known historical properties in the disturbance area. Resources avoided by project design will be identified as environmentally sensitive areas so that these locations are not inadvertently encroached upon during construction. New cultural resources identified during preconstruction subsurface explorations, monitoring activities, and as inadvertent discoveries during construction will require testing to assess their research potential and eligibility for the listing in the CRHR.

Evaluation efforts will involve archival research and archaeological fieldwork. Fieldwork methodologies will be tailored to the location, circumstance, and nature of the find. Therefore, it may be appropriate to use mechanical trenching techniques, controlled excavation units, or block exposures, shovel sampling explorations, or any combination of these. All newly identified resources will be thoroughly mapped, photographed, located through GIS, and recorded on DPR 523 forms.

If resources are determined to be eligible to the CRHR and cannot be avoided by construction, data recovery will be required. Data recovery may involve archaeological excavation, or for resources such as hollow sidewalks, detailed recordation on DPR 523 forms.

MM CUL-5

The following measures shall be implemented should construction activities result in the accidental discovery of human remains and associated cultural materials. The treatment of human remains and of associated or unassociated funerary objects discovered during any soil-disturbing activities shall comply with applicable state laws. This shall include:

- Immediate notification of the coroner of the county in which the project is located.
- In the event of the coroner's determination that the human remains are Native American, notification of the California NAHC, which shall appoint a most likely descendent (MLD) (PRC Section 5097.98).
- RT shall make all reasonable efforts to develop an agreement for the treatment, with appropriate dignity, of human remains and associated or unassociated funerary objects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(d)). The agreement should take into consideration the appropriate excavation, removal, recordation, analysis, custodianship, curation, and final disposition of the human remains and associated or unassociated funerary objects.
- The PRC allows 48 hours for the MLD to make recommendations after access has been allowed to the remains. If the MLD and the other parties do not agree on the reburial method, RT shall follow Section 5097.98(b) of the PRC, which states that "the landowner or his or her authorized representative shall reinter the human remains and items associated with Native American burials with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance."

MM NOI-1

During final design, RT will specify that low-impact common crossings (frogs) be installed at the 7th St and F Street and 7th St and H Street intersections.

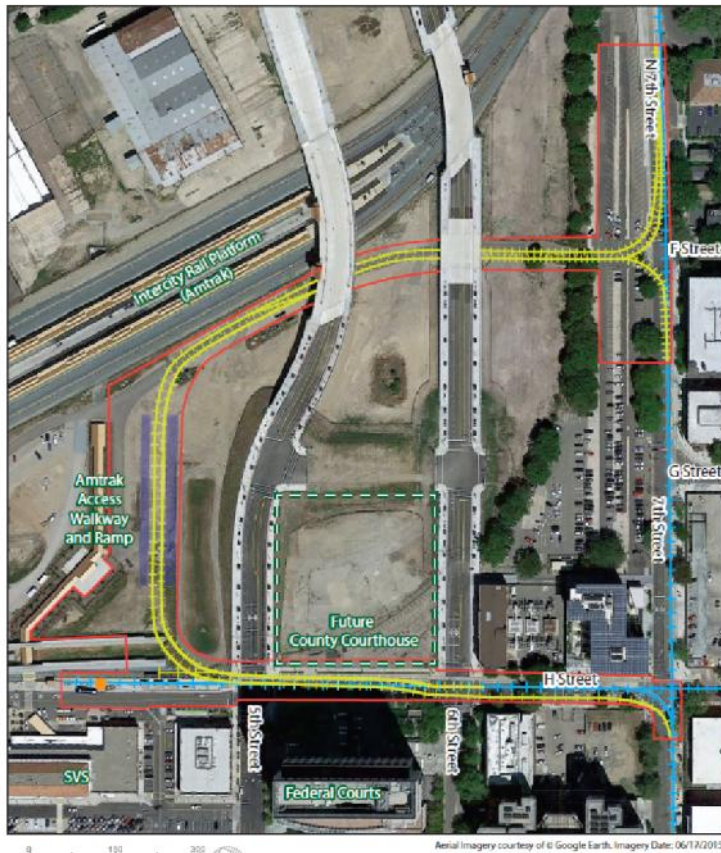
MM NOI-2

During operations, RT will apply rail curve grease at the 7th St and F Street and 7th St and H Street intersections. Applications will be made at sufficient intervals and quantities to minimize wheel squeal during normal operations.

Sacramento Valley Station IS/MND

- Prepared Initial Study (IS) and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) under CEQA
- Key Elements of Project:
 - Double-tracking H Street between 7th and 4th Streets
 - Relocate LRT Station from H Street to N-S location west of Lot 40
 - Double-track Loop from H Street north to future F Street and west to 7th Street
 - Railyard Station to serve future developments

SVS Project Elements



LEGEND

-  New Side Boarding Option
-  New Light Rail Tracks
-  Existing Light Rail Tracks
-  Bus Charging Station
-  Disturbance Area

FIGURE 2-1a
 Sacramento Valley Station Improvements -
 Side-boarding Station Option
 Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements Project
 Sacramento Regional Transit District
 Sacramento, CA



LEGEND

-  Railyards Station Platform
-  Existing Light Rail Tracks
-  Disturbance Area

FIGURE 2-3
 Railyards Station at 7th Street
 Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements Project
 Sacramento Regional Transit District
 Sacramento, CA

SVS Loop Key Attributes

- Planned project since adoption of Green Line LPA in 2003
- Environmentally clear under CEQA
- Required for streetcar operations & improves access to Intercity Rail platforms
- Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funding
- Estimated construction cost is \$45-\$50M
- Final design to begin following CEQA clearance

SVS Loop Next Steps

- Prepared Initial Study (IS) and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) under CEQA
- Recommending releasing IS/MND and holding a public hearing on April 25th
- Close Public comment period on April 29, 2016
- Recommend adopt IS/MND on May 23, 2016
- Apply for TIRCP funding in spring 2016

RESOLUTION NO. 16-03-_____

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Sacramento Regional Transit District on this date:

March 28, 2016

**RELEASING THE INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (IS/MND)
AND SET A PUBLIC HEARING FOR APRIL 25, 2016 TO RECEIVE COMMENTS ON
THE IS/MND FOR THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY STATION AREA IMPROVEMENTS.**

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
SACRAMENTO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT AS FOLLOWS:

THAT, the a public hearing is hereby set for April 25, 2016 at 6:00 PM at the
Regional Transit Auditorium at 1400 29th Street, Sacramento, CA 95812 in order to receive
public comment on the Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the
Sacramento Valley Station Area Improvements Project.

THAT, the General Manager/CEO or his designee is hereby authorized to publish a
Notice of the Public Hearing.

JAY SCHENIRER, Chair

A T T E S T:

MICHAEL R. WILEY, Secretary

By: _____
Cindy Brooks, Assistant Secretary