

# STAFF REPORT

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**DATE:** February 27, 2023  
**TO:** Sacramento Regional Transit Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Kevin Schroder, Senior Planner  
**SUBJ:** SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY MEETING  
SUMMARY OF JANUARY 27, 2023

## RECOMMENDATION

No Recommendation - For Information Only.

SacRT Board members present:

Chair Pat Hume was present for the regular meeting of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority on January 27, 2023.

Meeting Notes

### **Item 2. Public Comments**

- A RailPAC member had comments to supply food service on the trains.
- Citizen talked about limited service, and food cart potentially due to lower income section of the population.

### **Item 3. Consent Calendar**

All comments were approved.

### **Item 4. Recognition of Former Vice Chair Frazier (Stacey Mortensen/Dan Leavitt)**

Board Vote:

- All approved.

**Item 5. Approve a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Approving the 2023 Amended Interagency Transfer Agreement with the California Department of Transportation for Administration of the San Joaquins Intercity Passenger Rail Service and Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute Any and All Documents Related to the Project including Approving any and all Amendments thereto within Her Spending Authority (Brian Schmidt/Autumn Gowan)**

Staff Comments:

The 2023 Amended ITA makes the following changes:

- Adds a new Appendix L “Venture Railcar Equipment Transfer and Maintenance Agreement”.
- The intent is to contract with the Rail Commission as the Maintainer.

- Venture railcar maintenance services will not be performed by Amtrak. Currently, all other equipment in the Caltrans owned rail fleet will be maintained by Amtrak.
- Extends the termination date and provides an option to renew.
- Updates provisions regarding insurance and mutual indemnification.
- Include an equipment repair fund which will be used for wreck repairs as needed.

Board Comments:

- N/A

Public comments:

- N/A

Board Vote:

- All approved.

**Item 6. Approve a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Authorizing the Chair to Execute Amendment 01 to the FY 2023 San Joaquin Intercity Passenger Rail Service Operating Agreement with Amtrak and Authorizing the Executive Director to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project including Approving any and all additional Amendments thereto within Her Spending Authority (Brian Schmidt/Autumn Gowan)**

Staff Comments:

- The Authority will be responsible for the administration, maintenance, management, oversight, and operation of the Venture Railcars.
- This First Amendment to the FY2023 Operating Agreement will transfer operations of the Venture Railcars to Amtrak.

Board Comments:

- Vito: Asked about nationwide efforts by Amtrak and the federal government to increase service.

Public comments:

- N/A

Board Vote:

- All approved.

**Item 7. Approve a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute and Submit Any and All Grant Applications, Agreements, Certifications, and Assurances and any other documents necessary to Obtain Financial Assistance Provided by the California State Transportation Agency Under the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) (Dan Leavitt)**

Staff Comments:

- The proposed project expansion of the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) will be presented to the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Rail Commission) who is the owner and operator of ACE.

- The Rail Commission Board will present their own Board approval item for the Rail Commission portion of this joint application in February.
- Project Description: San Joaquin's 9<sup>th</sup> Daily Round-Trip Stockton to Fresno. This project includes capital improvements towards the extension of the 9<sup>th</sup> daily round trip on the BNSF corridor from Stockton to Fresno and a reconfiguration of the temporary short run service from Natomas to Stockton.
- Network Integration Planning: Request for additional planning resources for further network integration planning efforts.

Board Comments:

- Vito: Do we need planning studies before accepting any funds? Staff response: We have studied the requested needs in the grant application.

Public comments:

- Asked about the application due dates.

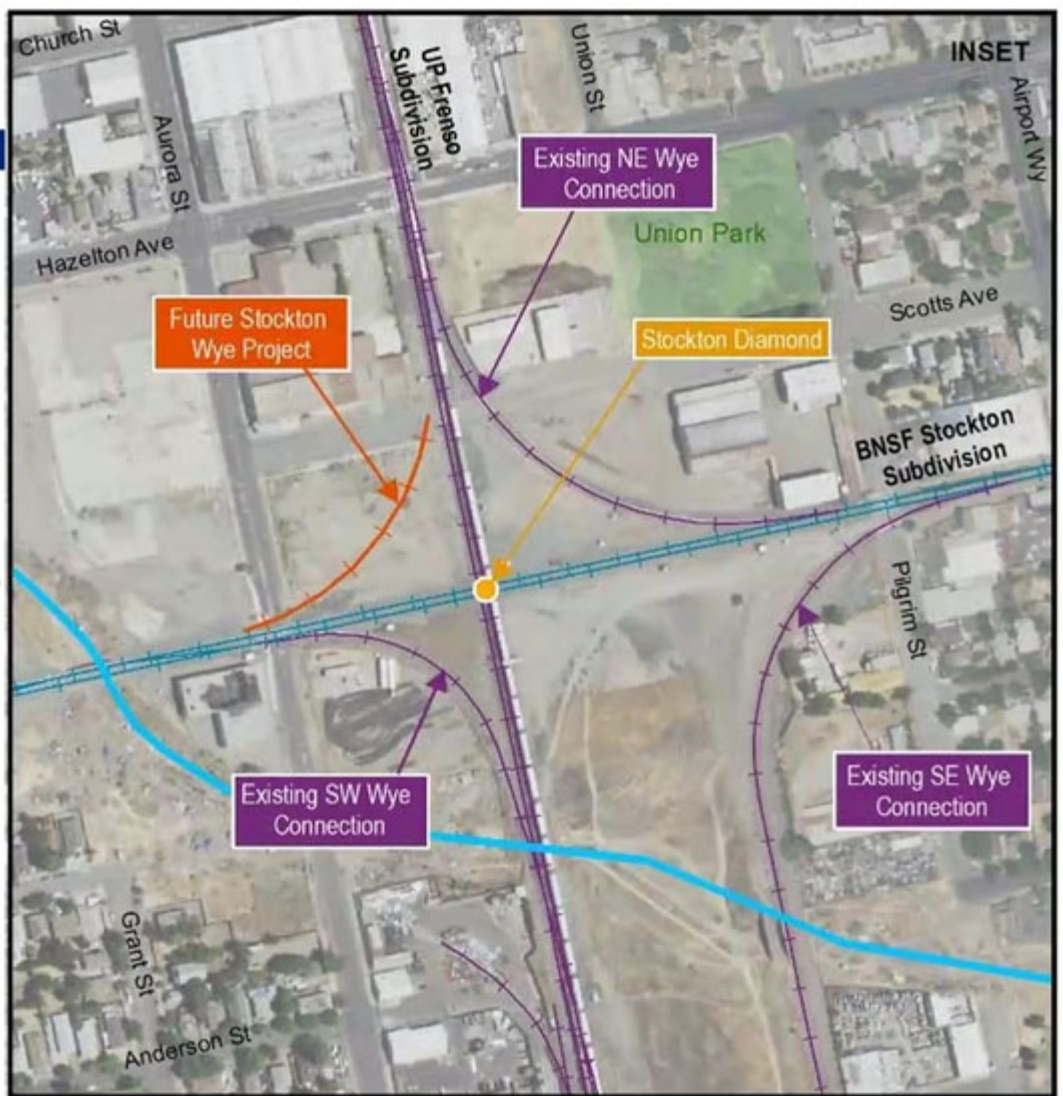
Board Vote:

- All approved.

**Item 8. Approve a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Authorizing the Executive Director to Submit and Execute Any and All Grant Applications, Agreements, Certifications, and Assurances and Any Other Documents Necessary to the California State Transportation Agency to obtain State Rail Assistance (SRA) Funding in the Amount of \$10,961,738 for the Stockton Wye (Angela Miller)**

Staff Comments:

- Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) created the State Rail Assistance (SRA) Program by directing a portion of new revenue specifically to intercity rail and commuter rail.
- SB1 directs a 0.5% portion of new diesel sales tax revenue for allocation, with half going to the five commuter rail providers and half to intercity rail corridors.
- SRA was created to provide operating and capital assistance for commuter and intercity rail agencies.
- The Authority has been preserving an available balance in SRA funding of \$26,670,000 because the larger Madera Station, Stockton Wye and Oakley Station projects that are underway and will require additional funding due to post-pandemic price increases.
- Many materials are 12-18 months out for delivery.
- The Stockton Wye project will construct a northwest track connection between the two railroads at the Stockton Diamond where a connection does not currently exist.
- The connection provides a critical connection for Amtrak San Joaquin trains running north-south to connect with San Joaquin trains running east-west.
- It will also improve the operation efficiency of ACE, BNSF, UPRR and short-haul freight trains.
- The original cost estimate for the Stockton Wye was completed in early 2019 at approximately \$9-\$11 million.
- The updated project cost is estimated at \$17.5 million.
- The requested funding for the Stockton Wye would leave an existing SRA balance of nearly \$16 million for other projects.



Board Comments:

- Vito: How much funds enter the program each year? Staff response: The program gains around \$5-6 million a year from allocations.

Public comments:

- N/A

Board Vote:

- All approved.

**Item 9. Approve a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Powers Authority Approving an Agreement with Resource Systems Group, Inc. for Passenger and Market Research Services for an Amount Not-To-Exceed \$875,026 and Authorizing the Executive Director to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project (David Lipari/Autumn Gowan)**

Staff Comments:

- As the San Joaquin's continue to recover in ridership from the pandemic, it is important to understand more about the passengers and potential ridership market.
- In 2019, a similar effort to this scope of work was performed. The data from this new project will help the agency understand how the ridership and market has changed.
- There will be onboard Passenger Research and Market Research preformed in tandem with SJRRC for ACE.
- The project is setup to have research performed on a bi-annual basis.
- FY 22/23 is the first research year, and the contract amount covers the three research years and optional fourth year.
- Awarded to Resource Systems Group, Inc.

Board Comments:

- N/A

Public comments:

- N/A

Board Vote:

- All approved.

**Item 10. Election of Officers (Vice Chair Espinosa)**

Staff Comments:

- N/A

Board Comments:

- Pat Hume elected Chair.
- Rodrigo Espinosa elected chair.
- Doug Verboon elected vice chair.

Public comments:

- N/A

Board Vote:

- All approved.

**Item 11. DB Travel Time Reductions and Express Service Analysis and Conclusions (Dan Leavitt/Michael Weaver)**

Staff Comments:

- The consultants were tasked with identifying travel time savings, and the identification of potential operational issues and/or benefits. The study was delayed from 2017 due to the pandemic and other priorities.
- The major goal was to reduce travel time from northern California to Bakersfield to under six hours.

**Several initiatives were explored to reduce trip time on the San Joaquin Corridor with three options recommended for additional study**

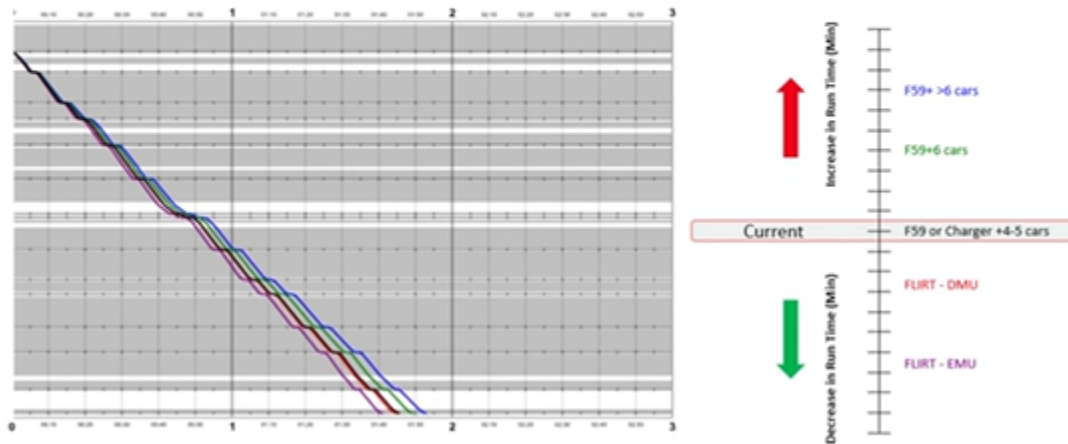


Explored Options	Results	Study Area	Recommended for further study
1 90 mph track speed upgrade + enhanced pulse <sup>1A2</sup>	42 minutes 12 minutes	Entire Corridor North of Merced	✓
2 Elimination of Merced Crew Change	Up to 7 minutes	North of Merced	✓
3 Terminate at Emeryville	10 minutes	North of Merced	✗
Bakersfield Skip-Stop	13-24 minutes		
4 Bakersfield Express (First westbound, last eastbound)	36 minutes	Entire Corridor	✗
Bakersfield Express (90 mph)	68 minutes		
5 Upgrade permanent speed restrictions	2 minutes	North of Merced	✓

(1) 90 mph runtimes calculated using Viriato  
 (2) Savings on pulse assumes optimized service plan and 5% distributed recovery time



**Optimizing consists, including reducing coaches and using newer Charger locomotives, will have modest travel time reductions**



General comment: not much difference with other equipment

## Raising speeds to 90 mph reduces trip time and allows for a more efficient schedule pattern



90 mph maximum and curve speeds

**Scope of improvements**

Segment	Track Miles eligible for upgrade
Oakland-Merced	103.1
Merced-Bakersfield	153.5

**Considerations**

- All 79 mph can territory can be raised to 90 mph between Port Chicago and Bakersfield
- Utilization of second Merced platform allows for unconstrained meets
- Continued agreement to operate a pulse schedule

**Time Savings**

	Eastbound (minutes)	Westbound (minutes)
Current Plan	381	378
90 mph	338	338
<b>Travel Time Reduction</b>	<b>43 minutes</b>	<b>40 minutes</b>
<b>Itemized reduction</b>		
Increase to 90 mph	22 minutes	22 minutes
North of Merced	7 minutes	7 minutes
Optimized pulse	21 minutes	18 minutes
North of Merced	5	5

\*Times subject to change based on negotiations with freight carriers

\*General: faster speed allows for better operations of tracks.

90 mph maximum and curve speeds

## There are limited opportunities to increase speeds of permanent speed restrictions

To avoid potential conflicts or future service changes when California HSR begins operations, San Joaquins capital improvements south of Madera may be limited

While there are numerous segments with permanent speed restrictions that can be improved to increase speeds, in some segments track improvements are not possible, not feasible, or otherwise not recommended:

- Green line:** Geographical or physical limitations where track upgrades would require more costly and complex engineering or additional right-of-way
- Blue line:** Segments with only marginal potential improvements, such as track segments less than one-half mile in length or speed restrictions that still allow 60mph operation
- Orange line:** Near stations where passenger trains are not operating at top speed anyway

## Once trip time is below 6 hours, mid-route engineer change will not be required which will have additional time savings



Eliminate Crew Change

### Opportunity

- 10-minute Merced station dwell can be reduced with elimination of the engineer change

### Time Savings

- 7 minutes

### Other Considerations

- Increased lodging costs for crews in Bakersfield or Oakland
- Cost of crew base closure at Merced

### Additional Analysis

Amtrak labor rules require **penalty payments** if a work assignment scheduled for less than 6 hours requires more than 6 hours **10 times in a 15-day period**.



## Starting and ending service at Emeryville would reduce trip time by 10 minutes compared to starting and ending at Oakland



Terminate at Emeryville



Pros	Cons
10 minutes time savings	73,391 on/off's in FY 2018 at Oakland
Reduction in train volume between Oakland and OMF	Loss of one seat ride between Bakersfield to Oakland
Reduction in crew on duty time	Complication of bus connections



**Near term, this option would strand a high ridership station**

**Oakland will continue to be a major market on San Joaquin service**



Skip Stop

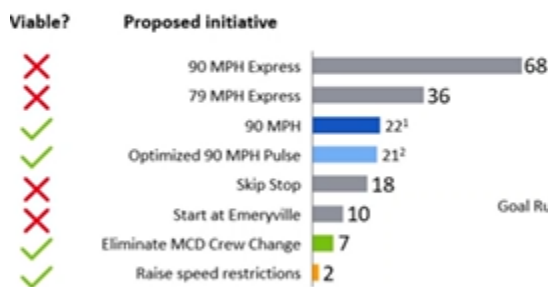
## Skip stop and express service would disconnect smaller markets from the California rail network



Multiple stopping patterns disrupt the streamlined operational patterns of the all-day pulse schedule and significantly restrict or eliminate trips offered between intermediate stops

## Reducing end-to-end run times below 6 hours prior to introduction of HSR can be achieved through multiple initiatives

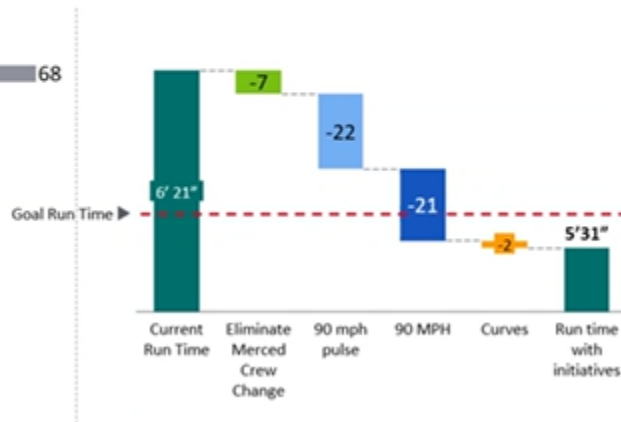
### Summary of savings by concept (minutes)



✓ Viable      ✗ Non-viable

(1) 90 mph runtimes calculated using Viriato  
(2) Savings on pulse assumes optimized service plan and 5% distributed recovery time

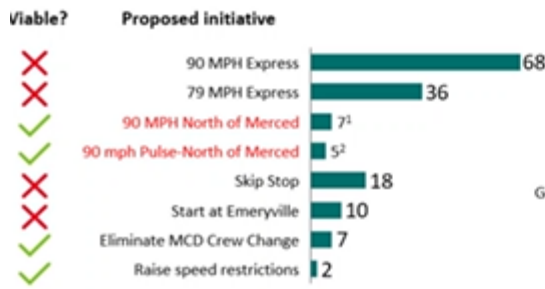
### Implementing multiple initiatives will achieve the run time goal



If near term investments are targeted only north of Merced, there will not be sufficient time savings to achieve targeted trip times



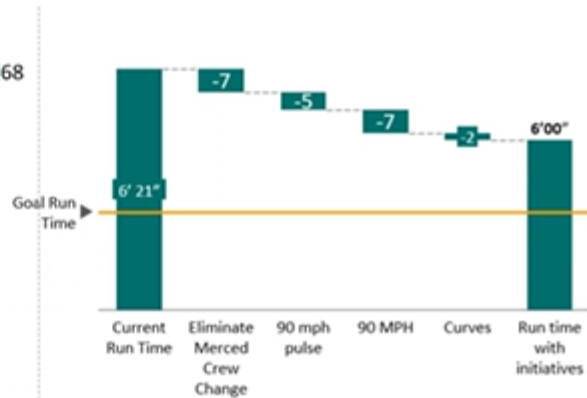
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Implementing multiple initiatives will achieve the run time goal



Board Comments:

- Vito: These graphs show the competitiveness of making changes to rail.

Public comments:

- Thank you for the pros and cons of changes to rail service.

Board Vote:

- N/A

## Item 12. Update on 2023 SJJPA Business Plan (Dan Leavitt)

Staff Comments:

- Purpose: Identify SJJPA’s intentions for the next two State Fiscal Years approved by the State and used to develop annual appropriations requests to the State Legislature.
- Public review draft of the plan will be released in late February 2023.
- Final draft will be presented to the board on March 24, 2023.
- The draft plan will highlight impacts from ridership and revenue.
- There is also discussion of next steps for the full return of San Joaquins service, including reintroduction of the 7<sup>th</sup> roundtrip for the Sacramento region and additional thruway bus service.
- There will be details of the expanded Valley Rail Program planning for 2030 including the Valley Rail extension north from Sacramento to Butte County.

Board Comments:

- No comments

Public comments:

- Comments about train connections to Sacramento.

Board Vote:

- N/A

### **Item 13. Report to the Legislature on SB 742 Implementation (Dan Leavitt)**

Staff Comments: SB 742, signed by Governor Newsom in 2019, removed the requirement for intercity passenger rail/thruway bus services to sell companion rail ticket as condition of the sale. This is the follow up report:

## **SB 742 Report to Legislature**

- Between January 2022 and November 2022, the average bus-only (non-connecting) monthly ridership for each of the routes offering bus-only ticketing associated with the San Joaquins was as follows:
  - Route 1C (Bakersfield – Santa Monica) = 488
  - Route 7 (Martinez – Santa Rosa – Arcata) = 389
  - Route 10 (Santa Barbara – Bakersfield – Las Vegas) = 1,042
  - Route 15 (Merced/Fresno – Yosemite) = 4,725
  - Route 18 (Visalia – Hanford – Santa Maria) = 232
  - Route 19 (San Bernardino – Pasadena – San Bernardino) = 557
- SJJPA staff believe the impacts of SB 742 implementation efforts have been minimal to privately operated motor carrier services.

Board Comments:

- N/A

Public comments:

- Question about connections from bus service along I-5 and rail connections.

Board Vote:

- N/A

### **Item 14. Board Member Comments**

- N/A

### **Item 15. Executive Director's Report Adjournment**

- Potential program to get funds for double tracking along corridors. Updates to follow this year.

**The next regular meeting is scheduled for: March 24, 2023 – 9:00 am**