



**STOCKTON
DIAMOND**
Unlocking Northern
California's Freight and
Passenger Rail Potential



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Stockton Diamond Grade Separation

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: March 28, 2022 – April 27, 2022

The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC) in coordination with the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), announces the availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project (Project). The Draft EA has been prepared and is being made available pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being or have been carried out by the State of California pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated July 23, 2019, and executed by the Federal Railroad Administration and the State of California (MOU). Under that MOU, the Authority is the project's lead agency under NEPA. Prior to the MOU, the FRA was the federal lead agency. SJRRC, the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) commuter rail service owner-operator, is the project sponsor and joint lead agency under NEPA.

A. Project Description and Location

The Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project (proposed Project) is a critical passenger and freight mobility project that would construct a grade separation of the Burlington North Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway (BNSF) and Union Pacific Railroad (UP) rail lines at the Stockton Diamond rail intersection located just south of Downtown Stockton near South Aurora Street and East Scotts Avenue in the City of Stockton in San Joaquin County, California. The area of impacts studied in the Draft EA is bounded by Robert J. Cabral Station to the north; the UP Stockton Yard to the south, located approximately at East Fourth Street; South Pilgrim Street to the east; and South Grant Street to the west.

The proposed Project would construct a grade separation of the BNSF and UP rail lines to reduce rail congestion and allow passenger and freight rail traffic to flow uninterrupted through the crossing. Currently, the BNSF Stockton Subdivision and the UP Fresno Subdivision consist of two main tracks each, and they intersect each other at a level, at-grade crossing known as the Stockton Diamond. This rail intersection is the busiest at-grade railway junction in California. The at-grade crossing experiences substantial congestion and delays service for people and freight throughout the Central Valley—and for freight on the broader national network. The current, at-grade configuration of the tracks results in critical delays to passenger and freight trains in the area, including those serving the Port of Stockton. Train congestion also causes vehicle delays at roadway-rail crossings and creates potential motor vehicle, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian conflicts.

The current ACE and San Joaquins intercity passenger rail services are constrained by the Stockton Diamond Interlock at-grade crossing, which can reduce reliability and on-time performance for both passenger and freight rail service. The grade separation would help improve the operational performance for SJRRC and the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (the agency responsible for managing the Amtrak San Joaquins intercity passenger rail service), as they provide service between the Central Valley, Sacramento, and San Francisco Bay Area. Transit in San Joaquin County is also important to the region and includes a system of bus rapid transit, intercity and interregional bus transit services, ACE commuter rail service, and San Joaquins intercity rail service.

The reduction in rail congestion with the implementation of this Project would reduce delays for passenger and freight rail providers, improve freight mobility and reduce travel times for motor vehicle, bicyclist, and pedestrian traffic. It also would reduce locomotive and automobile idling and air emissions.

The proposed Project's public benefits would extend to motorists, pedestrians, rail passengers, freight shippers, and residents throughout the region. Additional benefits would include reduced fuel consumption, lower freight rail transportation costs, and improved travel times and reliability.

B. Potential Environmental Impacts

As described and explained in the Draft EA, the proposed Project would result in overall beneficial effect on long-term air quality, traffic and transportation, and visual quality and aesthetics in the Project Study Area.

The proposed Project would not result in adverse effects on any resource evaluated in the Draft EA, after incorporation of Best Management Practices (BMP) and mitigation.

The proposed Project would not result in adverse effects with mitigation on the following resources evaluated in the Draft EA: Land Use and Planning, Hazardous Waste and Materials, Noise and Ground-borne Vibration, and Biological Resources.

C. Public Review Period

A 30-day public and agency review period is scheduled from March 28, 2022 to April 27, 2022. Comments may be made on comment cards provided at the open house identified below or submitted in writing by regular mail or email. Please note that you do not need to attend one of the open houses to comment on the Draft EA. Please send written comments to:

Email:

info@stocktondiamond.com

Mail:

c/o Public Outreach
2379 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 200
Sacramento, California 95833

Comments on the Draft EA must be received on or before the end of the review period, which is April 27, 2022.

D. Public Open House

On behalf of the Authority, SJRRC will hold an Open House to receive comments on the Draft EA. Written comments may be made on comment cards that will be provided at the Open House scheduled from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm on April 6, 2022, at Stribley Community Center, located at 1760 East Sonora Street, Stockton, California 95205.

The Open House will be an opportunity for the public to learn more about the proposed Project, interact with Project team members, ask questions and submit formal comments on the Draft EA during the Project's 30-day public comment period.

If unable to attend the Open House, videos of the meeting presentations will be posted to the Project website at <https://www.stocktondiamond.com/> the day after the meeting and available for review until 5:00 p.m. on April 27, 2022.

E. Availability of Draft Environmental Assessment

In addition to posting the electronic version of the Draft EA on the SJRRC website at <https://www.stocktondiamond.com/>. Printed copies of the Draft EA and electronic copies of the associated technical report included in the appendices are available for review at the following locations during hours the facilities are open (open days/hours may be reduced for compliance with coronavirus public health and safety directives):

- 345 N. El Dorado St., Stockton, CA 95202 (City of Stockton Community Development Office)
- 555 E Weber Avenue, Stockton, CA 95202-2804 (San Joaquin Council of Governments)
- 605 N. El Dorado St, Stockton, CA 95202-1907 (Cesar Chavez Central Library)
- 502 W. Benjamin Holt Dr, Stockton, CA 95207 (Margaret K. Troke Branch Library)
- 2324 Pock Ln, Stockton, CA 95205-7821 (Maya Angelou Branch Library)
- 1760 E Sonora St, Stockton, CA 95205 (Stribley Micro Library)
- 2370 E Main St, Stockton, CA 95205 (Fair Oaks Branch Library)
- 1453 W. French Camp Rd, Stockton, CA 95206 (Weston Ranch Branch Library)
- 5758 Lorraine Ave., Stockton, CA 95210 (Arnold Rue Micro Library)
- 734 Houston Ave., Stockton, CA 95206 (Van Buskirk Micro Library)

Printed copies of the Draft EA and electronic copies of the associated appendices are also available for review during business hours at the Authority's Headquarters at 770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1, Sacramento, CA 95814, and the SJRRC's office at 949 E. Channel St. Stockton, CA 95202. You may also request a copy of the Draft EA and associated appendices by calling (209) 235-0133 or emailing info@StocktonDiamond.com.