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 to connect the existing Green Line service to the SVS, 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will be avoided by establishing a designated construction-free buffer zone around the nests until the nests are no longer active, as determined by a qualified biologist.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 overhead contact system (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 asses 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 the following:

- 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 Street and F Street and 7th Street and H Street intersections.

MM NOI-2 During operations, RT will apply rail curve grease at the 7th Street and F Street and 7th Street and H Street intersections. Applications will be made at sufficient intervals and quantities to minimize wheel squeal during normal operations.