

RESOLUTION SJJPA 20/21- 005

RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY ADOPTING THE FINAL INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (FINAL IS/MND) FOR THE MADERA STATION RELOCATION PROJECT (PROJECT), ADOPTING THE MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE PROJECT, APPROVING THE MADERA STATION RELOCATION PROJECT, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE AND FILE A NOTICE OF DETERMINATION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) FOR THE PROJECT, AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECT

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority intends to advance feasible projects to increase San Joaquin's ridership and its associated congestion, air quality, greenhouse gas, mobility, and access benefits; and

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority has prepared the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Final IS/MND), which analyzes the impacts of the Madera Station Relocation Project (Project); and

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority found that with the adoption of the mitigation measures described in the Final IS/MND, all potentially significant impacts on the environment would be reduced to a less than significant level; and

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority did circulate the Draft IS/MND for agency and public comment as required by CEQA; and

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority did consider any comments made by agencies and public prior to making its decision on the project; and

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority has independently reviewed the Final IS/MND and the conclusions considered reflect the independent judgment and analysis of the Authority; and

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority has prepared the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project, incorporating all of the mitigation recommendations from the Final IS/MND;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED;

1. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority finds, acting as lead agency and using its independent judgment and analysis, based on the whole record before it, including the Final IS/MND and the agency and public comments received, there is, with mitigation, no substantial evidence that the Project will have a significant effect on the environment.

2. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority does hereby adopt the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project prepared by AECOM and dated January 2021.
3. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority does hereby adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project and incorporates the mitigation measures contained therein as conditions to the Project.
4. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority does hereby approve the Project as particularly described in the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared by AECOM and dated January 2021.
5. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority does hereby authorize the Executive Director to execute and file the Notice of Determination as required by CEQA.
6. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority does hereby authorize and direct the Executive Director to place the documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based on file at its offices at 949 E Channel Street, Stockton 95202.
7. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority does hereby authorize the Executive Director to execute any and all documents related to the Project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority this 22nd day of January 2021, by the following vote:

AYES: 9 - Espinoza, Frazier, Haubert, Hudson, Hume, Kuehne, Shuklian, Verboon,
Chair Chiesa
NOES: 0
ABSENT: 1 - Le'on

ATTEST: 0


STACEY MORTENSEN, Secretary

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT
POWERS AUTHORITY


VITO CHIESA, Chair

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Meeting of January 22, 2021

STAFF REPORT

Item 4

ACTION

Approve a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Adopting the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Final IS/MND) for the Madera Station Relocation Project (Project), Adopting the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project, Approving the Madera Station Relocation Project, Authorizing and Directing the Executive Director to Execute and File a Notice of Determination Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Project, and Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute Any and All Documents Related to the Project

Background:

The Madera Station Relocation Project (Project) is one part of the larger Valley Rail Program, a scalable plan intended to improve intercity and commuter rail connectivity, improve air quality, improve access to economic opportunities and affordable housing to disadvantaged communities, and create opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD) in the Central Valley. In addition to the Proposed Project, the larger Valley Rail Project also includes an extension of the San Joaquins and Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) services to Sacramento as well as an extension of ACE to Merced, which builds upon ACE funding from Senate Bill 132 and would provide connectivity to future California High-Speed Rail (HSR) service.

CEQA PROCESS SCHEDULE

- May 14, 2020: SJJPA held webinars to describe the Madera Station Relocation Project and its purpose, to explain the environmental review process, the schedule for the Proposed Project, and describe how the public can participate in the environmental review process and get more information.
- October 14, 2020: SJJPA released a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Madera Station Relocation Project, which provided information about the 30-day public review and comment period, how to submit public comments, and public online meetings related to the Draft IS/MND.
- November 5, 2020: Virtual public meetings were conducted for the Draft IS/MND public review period.

- January 6, 2021: Final IS/MND and responses to comments posted to Project webpage and notification sent to agencies commenting on Draft IS/MND.
- January 6, 2021: Notification sent to interested parties and stakeholders.
- January 22, 2021: Final IS/MND is presented to SJJPA for adoption and Proposed Project is considered for approval.

MADERA STATION RELOCATION PROJECT: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Final IS/MND describes the Proposed Project as consisting of the two phases described below.

- Phase 1 consists of elements related to the Relocated Madera San Joaquins Station (Relocated Station) from Madera Acres to the location described in the vicinity of Avenue 12. The existing Madera San Joaquins Station would no longer be used for San Joaquins operations following commencement of San Joaquins service at the Relocated Station. Phase 1 would build out a station platform that is approximately 600 feet. A new turnout track with a length of 2,330 feet would be built that would tie-in to the existing BNSF mainline. A new access road would be constructed to provide access to the Relocation Station facilities and would run adjacent to the California High-Speed Rail (CAHSR) Project right-of-way.
- Phase 2 consists of high-speed rail (HSR) improvements at the Relocated Station to allow for future HSR service running along the future Merced to Bakersfield High Speed Rail Interim Operating Segment of the CAHSR Project to access the Relocated Station. This Interim HSR service is anticipated to be operated by the SJJPA. Phase 2 would build out a new HSR station platform that would be approximately 1,000 feet in length. New turnout track with a length of 14,600 feet would be built that would tie-in to the CAHSR Project mainline.

KEY ISSUES OF CONCERN RAISED IN DRAFT IS/MND COMMENTS

The following are some of the issues raised in comments on the Draft IS/MND. All Draft IS/MND comments received are included in Appendix I of the Final IS/MND.

- **Transportation**—Draft IS/MND comments expressed concern regarding access to the station by bicyclists and pedestrians, meeting Caltrans contextual bikeway guidance, and a lack of storage areas at the station for bicycles.
- **Air Quality**—Draft IS/MND comments expressed concern regarding generation of construction related dust, and pathogens such as Valley Fever that could be carried in construction dust.

- Air Quality—Draft IS/MND comments expressed concern that equipment exhausts as well as fugitive dust should be quantified.
- Air Quality—Draft IS/MND comments advised the SJJPA utilize the cleanest reasonably available off-road construction fleets and practices (i.e. eliminating unnecessary idling) to further reduce impacts from construction-related exhaust emissions and activities.
- Air Quality—Draft IS/MND comments expressed the potential need for a health risk assessment on one property located over 700 feet from the alignment.
- Traffic—Draft IS/MND comments on potential heavy dust during construction near SR-99 as a serious traffic concern.
- Traffic—Draft IS/MND comments requested further details regarding how VMT reductions were calculated.
- Noise and Vibration—Draft IS/MND comments expressed concern regarding Amtrak horn noise at Road 26 (existing Madera Station location).
- Land Use—Draft IS/MND comments asked how close the new station would be to the college.
- Funding—Draft IS/MND comments expressed concern where funding would come from for Phase 2.
- Alternatives—Draft IS/MND comments were submitted stating that the Avenue 12 location seems far south and that Road 17 & Road 15 should be considered.

Alternatives to the proposed station siting had already been considered and Avenue 12 showed the most overall benefits. All Draft IS/MND comments are responded to in the Final IS/MND.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The Final IS/MND presents the project's environmental impacts in detail. The Proposed Project would have less than significant impacts with mitigation for all environmental resource areas.

Mitigation measures are included in the Final IS/MND to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant for the Madera Station Relocation Project. Mitigation measures are presented in a summary table in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). The impacts that necessitated these mitigation measures are evaluated in Section 3 of the Initial Study (IS), along with the determination of less than significant after their implementation.

RIDERSHIP

Phase 1 of the Project presumes up to eight (8) San Joaquins roundtrips a day when the Relocated Station opens for service (anticipated in 2024). Phase 2 presumes up to eighteen (18) HSR service roundtrips a day (anticipated to commence in 2029). Once HSR service commences to the Relocated Station during Phase 2, San Joaquins trains would no longer serve the Relocated Station and would instead terminate at a new downtown multi-modal hub station in Merced, where they would connect to HSR trains, leaving only 18 HSR daily roundtrips serving the Relocated Station.

Once the San Joaquins terminate in Merced, it is possible that there could be local/regional passenger rail service in the future that utilizes the slots that the San Joaquins would no longer utilize. However, this would have to be a separate project and is not in the scope of this Project.

Ridership analysis was conducted for Phase 1 and Phase 2 for the years 2025 and 2029 respectively, which reflect estimated ridership for the operational plans at the Relocated Madera Station, as well as for a No-Build condition, where the existing station is not relocated. Ridership was assessed by estimating passenger “ons and offs” (or “boardings and alightings”). Estimating ons/offs is useful to assess usage of the station facilities, etc.

The estimated ridership for the Madera Station Relocated Station is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Estimated Proposed Project Ridership

No Build¹ 2025 (San Joaquins)	Phase 1² 2025 (San Joaquins)	Project Phase 2³ 2029 (High-Speed Rail Service)
40,200¹ (passenger ons/offs)	103,100² (passenger ons/offs)	210,600³ (passenger ons/offs)
Notes: ¹ Assumes eight (8) San Joaquins roundtrips serving the Existing Station. ² Assumes eight (8) San Joaquins roundtrips serving the Relocated Station. ³ Assumes eighteen (18) high-speed rail roundtrips serving the Relocated Station.		

More information on the ridership estimates is provided in Appendix G (Ridership, Vehicle Miles Traveled, and Parking Estimates) of the IS/MND.

SJJPA ridership studies have shown that relocating the Madera Station to the proposed location along Avenue 12 can provide substantial increases in San Joaquins ridership, as well as providing considerable air quality and greenhouse gas reduction benefits.

The Proposed Project would support enhanced intercity rail service within Madera County by implementing the Madera Station Relocation Project.

ESTIMATED COSTS FOR ALL PHASES OF THE PROJECT

Preliminary cost estimates of all Proposed Project elements – including trackwork, platforms, station facilities, power systems, drainage, bus depot, access road, and parking lots – were conducted for both Phases 1 and 2. Table 2 below provides the estimated cost for each phase, as well as a total for both phases.

Table 2. Preliminary Proposed Project Capital Cost Estimates

Phase 1	Phase 2	Total (Both Phases)
\$24.9 Million	\$105.0 Million	\$129.9 Million

Source: AECOM 2020.

Detailed information on the preliminary capital cost estimates is provided in Appendix F (Preliminary Project Capital Cost Estimates) of the Final IS/MND.

Fiscal Impact:

Funding for Phase 1 of the Proposed Project is included in the 2018 \$500.5 million Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) award for the Valley Rail Program.

Recommendation:

Approve a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Adopting the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Final IS/MND) for the Madera Station Relocation Project (Project), Adopting the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project, Approving the Madera Station Relocation Project, Authorizing and Directing the Executive Director to Execute and File a Notice of Determination Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Project, and Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute Any and All Documents Related to the Project.