

SJJPA RESOLUTION 24/25 –15

RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY ADOPTING THE FINAL INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION ADDENDUM FOR THE MADERA STATION RELOCATION PROJECT, AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Madera Station Relocation Project (Project) is one part of the larger Valley Rail Program, a scalable plan intended to improve rail connectivity, air quality, access to economic opportunities and affordable housing to disadvantaged communities, and to create opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD) in the Central Valley; and

WHEREAS, the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) was completed for the environmental clearance of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Project and was adopted by the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) at its January 22, 2021, meeting; and

WHEREAS, final design is nearly completed for Phase 1 and construction is expected to begin later in 2025; and

WHEREAS, a Final IS/MND Addendum for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Project has been completed to provide additional environmental clearance for updated project elements associated with both Phase 1 and Phase 2; and

WHEREAS, the conclusion to the addendum is that the changes would neither result in any new significant environmental impacts nor substantially increase the severity of previously disclosed impacts; and

WHEREAS, the IS/MND continues to serve as the appropriate document addressing the environmental impacts from the Project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and a subsequent MND need not to be prepared; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Adopts the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Addendum for the Madera Station Relocation Project, and Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute Any and All Documents Related to the Project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority this 19th day of March 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: 9 - Chiesa, Fugazi, Gonzalez, Alternate Hernandez, Pedrozo, Vadez, Vice-Chair Burgis, Vice-Chair Hume, Chair Verboon

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 1 - Shuklian

ABSTAIN: 0

ATTEST:


STACEY MORTENSEN, Secretary

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS
AUTHORITY


DOUG VERBOON, Chair

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
Special Meeting of March 19, 2025

STAFF REPORT

Item 5

ACTION

Adopt a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Adopting the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Addendum for the Madera Station Relocation 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 rail connectivity, air quality, access to economic opportunities and affordable housing to disadvantaged communities, and to create opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD) in the Central Valley. The Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) was completed for the environmental clearance of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Project and was adopted by the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) at its January 22, 2021, meeting. Final design is nearly completed for Phase 1 and construction is expected to begin later in 2025.

The Project consists of various project elements that can be separated into two phases, based on their purpose and timing of construction and implementation. The first phase, or “Phase 1” of the Project, consists of elements related to relocation of the San Joaquins station in Madera County from the current location at Madera Acres (in northern part of Madera County) to a location in southern Madera County in the vicinity of Avenue 12. The existing Madera San Joaquins Station will no longer be used for San Joaquins operations following commencement of San Joaquins service at the relocated Madera San Joaquins Station (or “Relocated Station”). Phase 1 will include:

- Building out a station platform that is approximately 600 feet;
- A new turnout track will be built with a length of 2,330 feet that will tie into the existing BNSF mainline; and
- A new access road will 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 1 is currently in Final Design.

The second phase, or “Phase 2” of the Project, consists of high-speed rail (HSR) improvements at the Relocated Station to allow for future HSR service associated with the future Merced to Bakersfield High Speed Rail Early Operating Segment (EOS) of the California High-Speed Rail (CAHSR) Project to serve the Relocated Station. The HSR service along EOS is anticipated to be operated by the Authority. Phase 2 is proposed to include:

- Building out a new HSR station platform that would be approximately 1,000 feet in length;
- A new turnout track with a length of 14,600 feet would be built and tie-in to the CAHSR Project mainline.

A Final IS/MND Addendum for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Project has been completed to provide additional environmental clearance for updated project elements associated with both Phase 1

and Phase 2. The reason an addendum to the IS/MND was pursued for the Project is based on the recent modification to the estimated parking demand, which resulted from new ridership forecasts that were recently completed as part of a MEGA (the National Infrastructure Project Assistance program) grant application. The updated ridership forecast led to an increase in the estimated amount of parking needed for Phase 2. Given the increase in parking demand, the Authority determined that further environmental analysis was necessary to evaluate impacts from additional vehicle miles traveled (VMT) - due to more vehicles traveling to/from the parking lot. As no new or previously undisclosed impacts would occur for the Project due to the additional parking, an addendum to the Final IS/MND was determined to be sufficient for the purposes of environmental clearance under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Several other updated project elements (i.e. changes to the site layout) – including the shift in the roadway and inclusion of roundabouts, reconfiguration/addition of retention ponds, separating bikeway out from a portion of the roadway, and the shifting of other station facilities locations – were made in early stages of the Phase 1 final design work prior to the determination of the need for additional parking. These other updated project elements necessitated the reconfiguration of the site layouts for both Phases 1 and 2 of the Project and were done to improve use of the footprint by generating a more efficient station site design and to accommodate comments from a landowner during the right-of-way procurement phase. Given these changes were limited to site configurations, it was determined that no additional environmental clearance was needed at that time. However, since the IS/MND Addendum became a necessity due to the need for additional parking, all other updated project elements for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 have been included in the IS/MND Addendum.

Updated Project Elements for Phase 1

Figure 1 shows the original site layout for Phase 1 of the Project. Figure 2 shows the reconfigured site layout for Phase 1 that includes the following updated project elements: shifted location/configuration of the parking lot; relocation/addition of storm drain retention ponds; shifted alignment of the access road; shifted location of bus facility and conversion to a temporary bus facility; and the shifted location of the pick-up/drop-off facility.

Figure 1. Phase 1 Original Site Layout

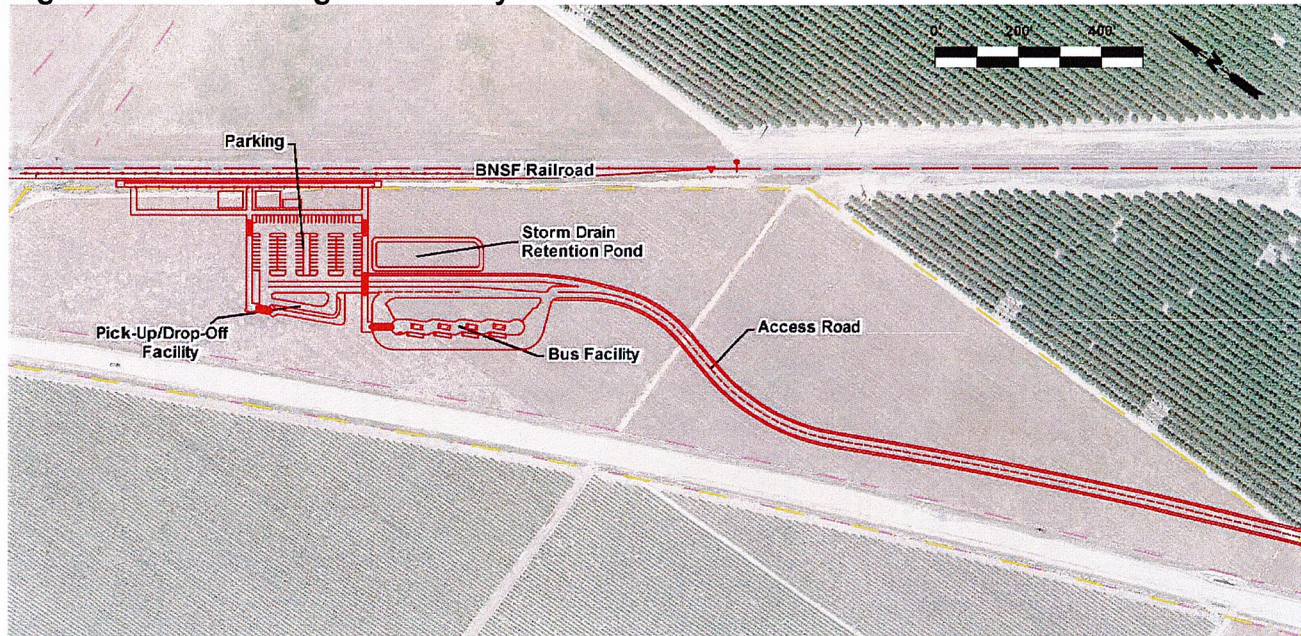
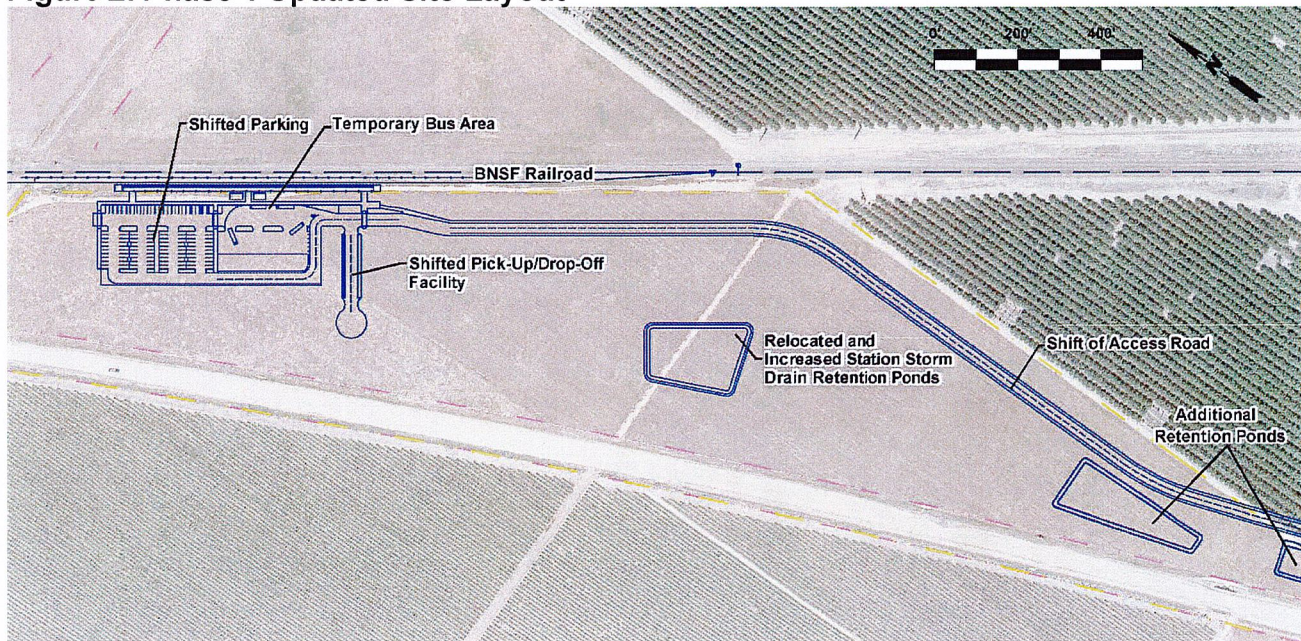


Figure 2. Phase 1 Updated Site Layout



Updated Project Elements for Phase 2

Figure 3 shows the original site layout for Phase 2 of the Project. Figure 4 shows the reconfigured site layout for Phase 2 that includes the following updated project elements: the expanded and reconfigures parking lot, a shift in the access roadway (mirroring the shift from Phase 1), the addition of two roundabouts, relocation/addition of a storm drain retention ponds; separation of the bike path out from a portion of the access road, and a reduction of the bus bays in the bus depot from eight (8) to six (6).

Figure 3. Phase 2 Original Site Layout

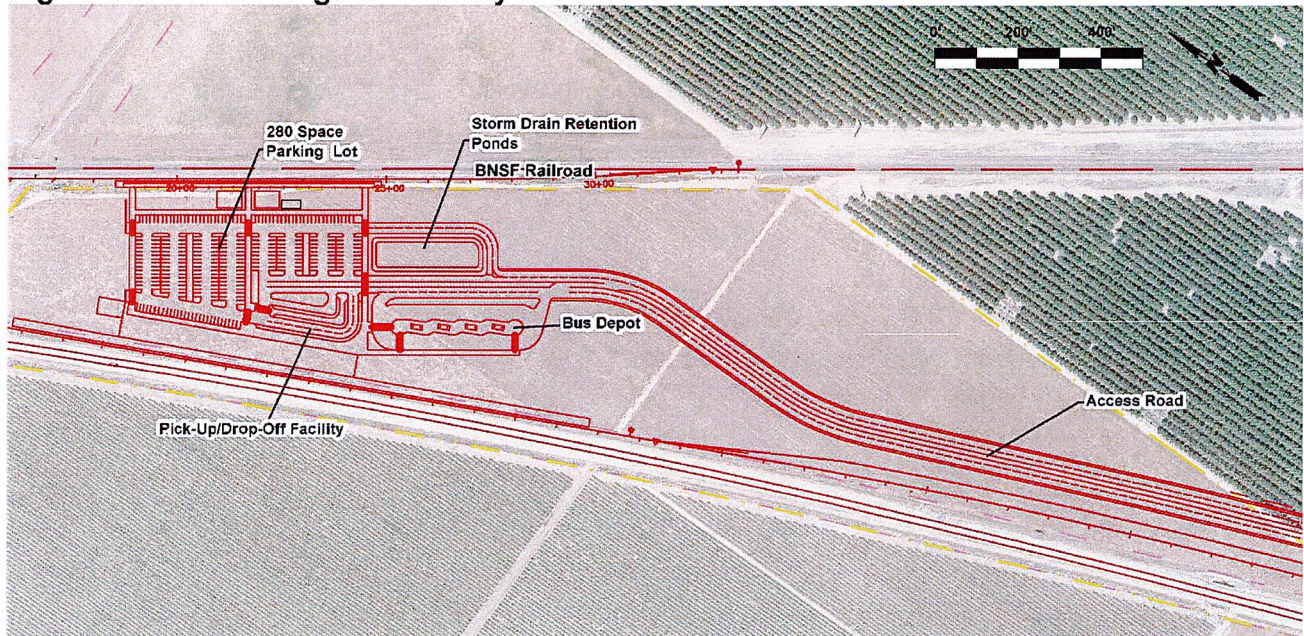
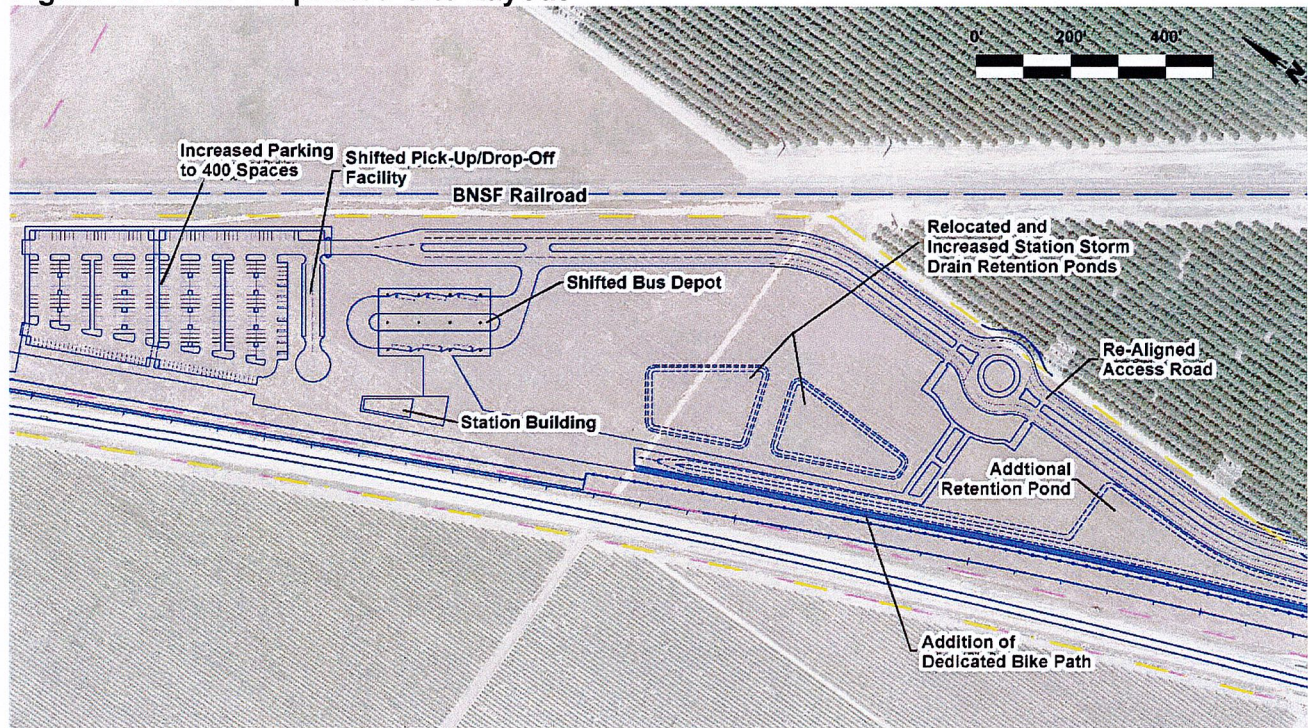


Figure 4. Phase 2 Updated Site Layout



The Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Addendum (IS/MND) for the Madera Station Relocation Project is included as an attachment to this staff report. The conclusion to the addendum is that the changes would neither result in any new significant environmental impacts nor substantially increase the severity of previously disclosed impacts. As such, the IS/MND continues to serve as the appropriate document addressing the environmental impacts from the Project under CEQA, and a subsequent MND is not required. There are no new significant

impacts or mitigation measures as a result of this updated analysis and an Addendum is the appropriate CEQA document. Per Section 15164, subdivision (C) of the CEQA Guidelines, "*An addendum need not be circulated for public review but can be included in or attached to the final EIR or adopted negative declaration.*" Furthermore, the IS/MND Addendum does not require a separate Notice of Determination from the 2021 IS/MND.

The Authority is currently conducting CEQA clearance for a third phase of the Project "Phase 3" for the full build out of Madera HSR Station facilities and is in the process of preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). To ensure the environmental clearance for Phase 3 is conducted properly, Phase 2 needs to be fully cleared prior to completing analysis for Phase 3 to ensure calculations are based on the correct baseline. The completion/approval of the IS/MND Addendum is needed prior to releasing the draft EIR for Phase 3 of the Project.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact of this Final IS/MND Addendum.

Recommendation:

Adopt a Resolution of the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Adopting the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Addendum for the Madera Station Relocation Project, and Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute Any and All Documents Related to the Project.