

## **Safety and Property Values Public Meeting**

August 12, 2010 - 6-9pm

South Natomas Community Center

### **Audience Questions:**

What investment is the airport making to this project?

Currently, flying out of Sac is still less attractive than making a trip to fly out of SF or Oakland.

*RT: The Airport has hired RT to do the engineering and design for the light rail station at the airport's new terminal.*

You spoke about property values within 1000 feet, but what about homes within one mile?

*RT: The studies we have found generally looked at property values close to, and as far away as  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. Most focused on the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile distance, because that is about as far as people will walk to get to light rail. It is possible that houses a mile away from light rail benefit as well, but RT has not found studies that specifically measure it.*

Doesn't the added street congestion at intersections with light rail crossings negatively impact local property values?

*RT: The purpose of the design and engineering is to avoid congestion at intersections. The signals downtown, for example, where light rail crosses streets every 3.5 minutes, are timed to smooth the flow of cars to avoid congestion. Similar standards would be applied to the Green Line.*

How large (acres) and the number of parking spots typical of the Park & Rides? What is expected (age) of the homeowner in the South Natomas area when LRT is operating?

*RT: There are no RT standards for a park-and-ride lot. These are adapted to what the neighborhood will allow. In some cases, such as terminal stations like Meadowview, the park-and-ride can be large, with seven acres and 690 parking spaces. In most cases, however, the park-and-ride lots are closer to two or three acres, holding at most 300 parking spaces. The Alternatives Analysis anticipated park-and-ride lots of between 300 and 2,000 cars. The current average age of a resident in South Natomas is approximately 31.5 years. The average age is projected to increase, due to a growing percentage of seniors (persons over age 65) in the population generally.*

Why and how is it possible to put light rail through a flood plain prior to levees being built to standards?

*RT: It is not possible to build light rail prior to the levees being restored. In fact, RT is planning its environmental work to coincide with the levee restoration timing, so that when construction is approved, the levees have already been restored.*

Will you build sound walls along Truxel properties?

How will you prevent rider from parking on our neighborhood streets?

Does the vibration from the train shake so much that it can damage our home foundations?

*RT: RT will engineer the light rail to minimize noise impacts, so that sound walls along Truxel will not be necessary. Sound walls act as barriers to pedestrians, and they provide hiding places for criminals. However, if the environmental studies result in a need for sound walls, they will be constructed as necessary. The easiest way to prevent riders from parking on neighborhood streets is to ask the city to provide neighborhood parking zones. Any non-resident vehicles parking more than two hours are ticketed. This has proven very effective. The quality of the track bed, and the slower speed of the light rail operation, will minimize the vibration from the trains. Also, the placement of the tracks in the median of the road will separate the tracks from any home.*

How confident are you that the Federal Government will invest in this expansion?

*RT: Judging from the ridership numbers we have seen so far, we are quite confident. We need to define an appropriate next phase – one that will have high use and reasonable cost. If we define that well, the Federal Government will consider the project cost-effective and be inclined to provide funding, if we can demonstrate the local funding to match the federal investment and operate the project..*

Hundreds, if not thousands, of South Natomas residents opposed having tracks and stations on Truxel south of I-80. Why did you ignore them?

*RT: RT recognizes that there are some South Natomas residents who oppose tracks and stations on Truxel. However, we have also heard from many, many residents of South Natomas who are anxious to have good, light rail service on Truxel. It is not that RT has ignored the opponents, extensive community outreach over many years provided many forums for opinions on both sides of the issue. After weighing all the input, a decision was made on the Truxel alignment seven years ago.*

Why does RT refuse to test its assumptions about ridership of the airport line by running buses to the airport?

*RT: It is not a matter of refusing to test assumptions. Rather, there are several reasons why RT is not running buses to the airport.*

- 1. Yolo bus is already providing service to the airport.*
- 2. RT does not have an operating agreement to serve the airport with buses.*
- 3. The Alternatives Analysis included transit use modeling that indicates the light rail will have much greater use than a bus line.*
- 4. The RT Board directed staff to consider a project with a greater goal than just serving the airport. The Green Line is to serve all of South and North Natomas as well. In fact, the overwhelming majority of trips on the Green Line will not involve the airport. At build-out, the airport will generate about 1,200 trips per weekday. That is not bad, but the rest of the line will generate over 26,000 trips per weekday.*

How confident are you that Sacramento voters will vote 2/3 in favor of another tax increase to fund this project?

*RT: We're not confident. We can only hope that we will present a solid enough case to convince the voters of Sacramento that the transit program (it is not just the Green Line) is deserving of public support.*

Why do you refuse to allow us to speak aloud and engage you? This "questions on the card" process does not give us the opportunity to tell you whether you answered the question to our satisfaction.

*RT: The "questions on the card" system was used to assure all questions would be asked and answered. We specifically did not want one or two questions to monopolize the time of the whole audience. Every question was read aloud, and if on topic, answered by the panelists. If the question was not on topic, it was placed on a note pad – a "parking lot" – to be answered later. As it was, RT allowed this question to be voiced, "How many here – residents of Natomas - are actually in favor of light rail on Truxel?" Two-thirds of the hands were raised in an affirmative response.*

Are any strategies being considered to increase ridership to the airport? The projected ridership is disappointing.  
Possibilities – Increase parking fees at the Airport. The County could do it as part of their "climate action plan."

*RT: Yes, RT is considering "limited stop service" which would result in a faster trip to and from the airport. However, the function of the Green Line is not just to serve the airport. When the Board adopted the locally preferred alternative, it was because it would also serve the communities of South and North Natomas, and support new developments and businesses. These will be the backbone of the Green Line's ridership. As for parking strategies at the airport, RT can only advise. The airport is in control of its concession revenues.*

Is the Green Line its own line with its own start and end or is it really a more complete "Gold Line" from Folsom to Natomas/or SMF?

*RT: At present, the Green Line is described as an extension to the Gold Line. As project definition continues, it could become its own line – particularly if it becomes a line that starts downtown, and serves the Sac Valley station on its way out to the Airport. Much of that decision rests on engineering and operations analysis that has not taken place yet.*

Property value increases shown – is that from date shown to current dates (i.e. 1978-2007)?

Most of the property value increases seem to apply to apartments/condos. Is this correct?

*RT: The property value increases shown were from the dates of the respective studies – that is, from two or three years before the light rail opened to two or three years after. One study, the BART Impact Study, took a second look ten years later, and found that the increase in property values had continued, so that properties near the BART were still proportionally higher 15 or more years after the station had opened. The studies found no significant difference between apartments/condos and single-family dwellings. The greater differences were caused by distance from the station.*

I already own property next to Arden Light Rail and we have much trouble with break-ins during work hours. How will you prevent this given the lack of funding for additional police and if on Truxel, more crimes with the high school students?

*RT: RT is continually working to increase system security. We have just been awarded a security grant to improve the speed and reliability of our station cameras, which will allow us to react to criminal activity in real time. We also have a standing policy of providing station security during school hours.*

(for Moll)

Do you focus on stations that are non-graffiti friendly?

*RT: Definitely. There are many materials in use today that are attractive, functional, and help minimize the effects of graffiti, or make clean-up very easy. This discourages taggers and contributes to a safer station environment.*

Perhaps it's too late but why isn't the light rail placed on the freeway medians with stops at the major overpasses like the systems in Chicago, SF and other metro areas?

It seems as if we are implementing a system that is not going to adequately meet the demand.

*RT: The option of running light rail on the freeway medians was examined in the Alternatives Analysis. That option had the highest cost and relatively low ridership. The reason for that was that it did not serve most parts of Natomas at all.*

Why not use existing bridge over the river at Route 160?

*RT: The existing bridge at Route 160 would have to be rebuilt, and that alignment would take the Green Line significantly to the east. This lengthens the trip to the airport, and increases the cost, while serving fewer people.*

RT is charging to park in lots. What can RT do to help houses around light rail stations from people parking in their communities (San Juan and Truxel)?

*RT: RT recommends that you ask the City to provide neighborhood parking zones. Any non-resident cars parked more than two hours get ticketed. That will deter transit users from parking on your streets.*

We are hearing a lot of positive reasons to have light rail. What are some of the negatives?

*RT: RT is trying to design the system to avoid the negatives. However, potential negatives include stations that do not fit into neighborhoods, inadequate pedestrian and bicycle access to stations, streets where cars drive too fast for pedestrian safety, and track bed that acts as a barrier rather than a neighborhood amenity. RT is reaching out to local residents to develop design principles and guidelines that will help us to avoid negative outcomes for the Green Line.*

Why come up Truxel instead of Northgate where no bridge would need to be built?

*RT: To come up Northgate would require a bridge. That is, the existing bridge would have to be re-built. It could not be rebuilt in its current form, so the new bridge would be cost-prohibitive. Coming up Northgate would serve fewer residents and very few businesses, if any.*

Currently RT has no bus from downtown to the airport.

Why doesn't RT see if there is a demand before laying all the infrastructure costs with light rail? Test the ridership, like having buses to go to the airport to test demand.

*RT: RT is fairly confident of the level of demand for service to the airport. There are several reasons why RT is not running buses to the airport in advance of the Green Line.*

- 1. Yolo bus is already providing service to the airport.*
- 2. RT does not have an operating agreement to serve the airport with buses.*

3. *The Alternatives Analysis included transit use modeling that indicates the light rail will have much greater use than a bus line.*

4. *The RT Board directed staff to consider a project with a greater goal than just serving the airport. The Green Line is to serve all of South and North Natomas as well. In fact, the overwhelming majority of trips on the Green Line will not involve the airport. At build-out, the airport will generate about 1,200 trips per weekday. That is not bad, but the rest of the line will generate over 26,000 trips per weekday.*

What is the speed limit with light rail on Truxel?

We need traffic calming on Truxel. Too many North Natomas commuters speed through our neighborhoods at 50+ mph! Build the DNA soon!!

*RT: RT believes the speed on Truxel should be closer to 35 mph. This allows the traffic to flow more smoothly while increasing pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The light rail stations will be designed to provide traffic calming.*

(for Walk Sacramento) "Eyes on the Street"

So who are going to be our "eyes on the Park" since rail will stop in our park and leave all the transients out? ....without any homes or any police (only 4)?

*RT: All of the residences and businesses surrounding the park will provide "eyes on the park." The same holds true for all of the light rail riders who will continue to ride the system. With a train coming every fifteen minutes in each direction, there will be hundreds of people every hour looking at the park, from the train and from the station. Add to that RT's own security personnel and station cameras, it will be an uncomfortable place for any kind of inappropriate behavior.*

How does light rail plan to subsidize operating losses? i.e., no rail system operates at cost or profit. In 2008, BART lost \$300 million. The City of Sacramento has been in a budget deficit for the last two years, do not expect a bailout. Do not expect taxpayers to approve tax increases either. I am concerned about cuts to service and safety.

*RT: RT has to operate within a specified budget. We will pursue a ballot initiative in 2012. If we are successful, the funding provided will support completion and operation of the Green Line (and a lot more). If we are not successful, then the amount of service that you see today will only increase very slowly, until the growth in population, air pollution and congestion overwhelms the potential new families that might choose to move here. Without additional revenue, the transit system will be unable to grow with the metropolitan area of Sacramento.*

Recently we lost funding for the school buses. We now have many young children crossing Truxel to go to Bannon Creek and American Lakes and Jefferson. If trains will run every 7 minutes, what about the children's safety?

*RT: Part of the design of the Green Line will be to address issues of pedestrian safety. Light rail systems around the world have been planned and operated perfectly safely in communities with children. RT will use the latest design and technology to achieve the highest level of safety.*

Consider moving street light on Truxel from Blue Heron Court to Bannon Creek Drive.

*RT: RT does not control street lights, but will work with the City as the project moves forward. By partnering with the City, we will be able to provide safety improvements at lower cost along Truxel.*

What happened with homes 10 feet from Truxel near Natomas High School? Safety issues for students if there is a stop sign at #8? Who will address? Will light rail reduce driving speeds for cars?

*RT: Homes 10 feet from Truxel should not be affected by the light rail, as it will be running in the median of Truxel. Stations and intersections will be designed for pedestrian safety, including children, seniors, and persons with disabilities. At the same time, the stations and the light rail will be designed to slow traffic to a safer speed, again to increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.*

Creating a robust resident based ambassador program can help with security. Examples: CCJPA station ambassadors or Downtown guides, NJ transit also has a Strog program. Establish a sense of residential ownership of the stations.

*RT: RT agrees.*

I am a 25 year resident of South Natomas. I totally support the Green Line. Is the airport including in their planning now, a Green Line station?

*RT: Yes, the airport hired RT to design the light rail approach to the new airport terminal that is being built. There will be a light rail station right by the entrance to security.*

How will you restrict non-locals from parking on city streets and private parking lots? (Represent local HOA across from Community Center that has parking lot for private HOA parking on Truxel Road)

*RT: RT recommends that you work with the City of Sacramento to designate local parking zones within a block or two of light rail stations. Any non-resident cars that park more than two hours are ticketed. Transit users will then find it more convenient to use proper park-and-ride lots.*

There are currently many transportation options to/from the airport; i.e., Yolo bus,

The Blue Van, hotel courtesy pick-up and delivery, rental car, ridesharing....  
Where is the need?

*RT: RT is not just providing a connection to the airport, although that is an important aspect of the Green Line. RT is providing a light rail extension to serve over 26,000 trips a day to residents of South and North Natomas. Yes, the airport will generate over 1,200 trips a day, but Natomas will use the system 22 times more.*

It was supposed to cost \$750 million in 2006 – with the addition of overpass at the Marketplace, what is the current cost?

*RT: We are not sure yet. Part of our current work is to find designs and technologies that will reduce the cost overall. For example, we have identified an alignment and construction method to reduce the cost of the bridge over the American River. We are trying to keep the cost of the total project to less than \$900 million in current dollars.*

When you increase property taxes, send one monthly light rail pass a month to local owners.

*RT: That's a great idea. RT has been discussing a direct marketing campaign that could include just that sort of thing. Already, when we review new development projects, we recommend that developers provide businesses and new residents with discounted transit passes for six months, so they can learn about RT. Did you know that at today's gas prices, transit saves a daily commuter (10.6 miles each way) over \$2,400 a year over and above their cost of transit?*

Why do we need this light rail?

Who's for it?

Whose money is behind it?

Are the cops going to patrol the line?

*RT: The light rail is intended to serve over 26,000 trips per weekday or 13,000 people.*

*By a show of hands at the meeting on August 12, about two-thirds of South Natomas residents are for it.*

*The "money behind it" is presently a grant from the Federal government and some Sacramento Measure A sales tax revenue. In time, it will require a new ballot initiative and more Federal dollars.*

*Yes, the Green Line will be patrolled by the same security as the rest of the light rail system – Sacramento PD, Sacramento Sheriff, and private security personnel.*

If light rail goes down the middle of the street, and the sheriff's block 3 lanes for the King's traffic, where do the residents drive?

*RT: The Sheriff will not block three lanes for King's traffic on Truxel. The light rail should provide enough capacity to avoid disrupting traffic even during a special event such as a major Kings' game.*

(for Paul Zykofsky)

Tell us what is the benefit to the 78 families who will lose their homes to this project?.....will they have a to move to a "livable community" as you call it? You site San Diego- you showed a picture of Seaport Village constructed by the Hyatt for the new convention center – Are you trying to expose that all the effects were due solely to the light rail not to the new convention center or Marriott or Manchester Hyatt?

*RT: There will be NO families who will lose their homes to the Green Line. The Board specifically directed staff to choose an alignment that would "not relocate or condemn any private residences."*

*The beneficial effects at Seaport Village were not all due to the light rail, but Seaport Village was built because of the light rail. It was the presence of light rail that allowed the Marriott and Hyatt to build with fewer parking spaces – thus at an affordable cost.*

(for Brill and Moll)

You both talk about unobstructed view....how do you propose to do this in a "park" that is basically weeds that are 5 feet tall, which is where light rail will end? So you want to influence for light rail purpose, how our community park is designed?

*RT: The park has to be designed as a park – its primary purpose. That will mean not allowing weeds to grow 5 feet tall. However, when we design the light rail station, we will also design it to be compatible with the park – shrubs that are trimmed and neat, trees that provide shade to the platform but do not obstruct the view from the park or nearby streets – these will be the features that provide for a safe transit environment and enhance the park.*

(for Brill)

Why did you chose Campbell as an example?....where condos run from \$500 K to single family homes starting at \$1 million? Why didn't you use statistics from King and Story Road which would not have been as favorable.

*RT: Campbell was a location where we had statistics before the station opened, and after, on a comparable basis. The values of the homes in the area were not the issue in the presentation. The question was "how does the light rail station affect crime in the area?" The answer was, "not much." The level of crime does not increase as a result of the light rail.*

Station 8, San Juan and Truxel, needs to be reexamined; the middle of the road appears to be dangerous.

*RT: RT will design the station, and access to the station, in a way that will increase pedestrian safety.*

Is there a plan to put the station on the east side of Truxel on the grass in front of Natomas High School?

*RT: The Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) adopted in 2003, shows a station located on the east side of Truxel as you stated. However, the current proposal is for the station to be in the median, at San Juan.*

What will affect of the station in the middle of the street do to the Truxel speed limits and traffic?

*RT: RT will design the stations to provide traffic calming, to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety.*

How much security will be at each station?

Will RT be securing the parking areas?

What are the usual hours RT serves parking areas?

There is a loitering problem at some #86 and #88 stations (bus stops). How will light rail stations be different?

*RT: The level of security at each station varies throughout the day. RT will use uniformed officers (Sacramento City and County), private security, and RT Security, both on the trains and at the platforms. Our plain clothes unit patrols the light rail as well. Closed Circuit Television cameras are monitored 24/7. Loitering activity is defined as missing two trains in a row. When we observe this behavior, if security is not already present, it is dispatched to the location.*

You mention deterrence, like equipment used for the transit system in Campbell, Ca., such as lights on platform, barriers and intrusion detection.

The Green Line will not have platforms and if so, I don't think residents will not like bright lights.

I don't think the Green Line will not have barriers or intrusion detection, so what deterrence equipment will the Green Line have to ensure the community safety?

*RT: We call the station area "platform." It is the place people have to stand in to board the train. Barriers do exist. They are formed by planters, benches, ramps, and fences. These guide people to locations where other people are, and guide them away from where they are not safe (like on the tracks). Intrusion detection does not require a fence or a gate – just detectors that tell the train operator or the security personnel that someone is not in the right place.*

*Lighting will be designed to provide personal safety after dark without intruding on the neighborhood. Placing the stations in the median of Truxel, for example, will put the platform and its lights 36 feet or more from the nearest houses, within a corridor of street trees. Deterrence will come from the whole design – cameras, lighting, unobstructed views, landscaping, and regular security presence.*