

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter identifies and describes the alternatives to the proposed MOS-1 project. The MOS-1 Project alignment along 7th Street was selected in the RT Downtown/Natomas/Airport (DNA) Alternatives Analysis, which is located at <http://www.sacrt.com/dna/alternatives/default.html>. The MOS-1 Project was also identified as the first minimum operating segment of the DNA Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project in the Final Program EIR for the Downtown/Natomas/Airport (DNA) Corridor Project (certified April 28, 2008), which is located at <http://www.sacrt.com/dna/news/feir.html>.

4.1 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED WITHIN THIS EIR

In accordance with CEQA Guideline 15126.6 (a): “Alternatives to the Proposed Project. An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives which are infeasible. The lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives.” CEQA also requires that a No Project Alternative be analyzed in the EIR.

The EIR evaluates the proposed MOS-1 alignment described in *Chapter 3, Project Description*, which would be an extension of the current Light Rail system from H Street at 8th Street, north on 8th Street to G Street (G Street to 7th Street LRT Alternative), west for one block on G Street and north along North 7th Street to Richards Boulevard in Downtown Sacramento. Southbound trains would go south on North 7th Street and 7th Street, intersecting the existing track at 7th and H Street. Two other alternatives have been considered: 1) LRT Alternative to get from H and 8th Street to 7th Street, and 2) a No-Project Alternative. A brief description of the Alternatives is provided below:

4.1.1 H Street to 7th Street LRT Alternative (West Lane of 7th Street)

This alternative turns from H Street into the west curb lane of 7th Street. This allows the sidewalk to be maintained at the corner of 7th and H, and requires the stop bar for the right lane of 7th Street to be pulled back less than 20 feet. Two lanes of traffic would be provided, and on-street parking would be maintained on the east side of the street. A special all-red traffic signal phase would be required for southbound trains, which would travel slowly through a 5 mph reverse curve. The tracks would continue on the west side of 7th Street all the way to the transition into street-running at North B Street where 7th Street becomes North 7th Street. There does not appear to be a disadvantage to being on the west side, and current concepts for future development on the west side of 7th Street between H Street and the railroad underpass does not include any driveways. Under the H Street to 7th Street LRT Alternative, the impacts would be similar to the proposed project, as described below:

- **Mitigation That Would No Longer Be Required-** All mitigation measures identified for project-specific and cumulative impacts would also be required for the H Street to 7th Street LRT Alternative.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impacts That Would No Longer Occur -** All of the significant and unavoidable project-specific and cumulative impacts would also occur under the H Street to 7th Street LRT Alternative.

Relationship of the H Street to 7th Street LRT Alternative to the Project Objectives

While this alternative would reduce proposed project impacts to 8th and G Streets, the alternative would not reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level and the impacts would be similar to the proposed project.

4.1.2 No-Project Alternative

Under the No-Project Alternative, the light rail would not be extended north from H Street to Richards Boulevard. Under CEQA, the No-Project Alternative must consider the effects of not proceeding with the project. The purpose of analyzing the No-Project Alternative is to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of the proposed project versus no project. The No-Project Alternative describes the environmental conditions that exist at the time that the environmental analysis begins (CEQA Guidelines, section 15126.6 (e) (2)). When compared with the proposed project, the No-Project Alternative would have reduced impacts, as described below:

- **Comparative Environmental Effects** – Impacts to air quality and traffic would result from the No-Project Alternative when compared to the proposed project because it would not reduce traffic congestion or air pollution; and it would provide no alternative mode of transportation, such as light rail. However, because the existing conditions would remain, there would be no impacts to the following resources:
 - Visual character of the area;
 - Biological resources;
 - Historical resources or archaeological resources;
 - Noise and vibration;
 - Geology and soils;
 - Hydrology; and
 - Hazardous materials.
 - Public services and utilities
- **Mitigation That Would No Longer Be Required** - Because the existing conditions would remain, none of the mitigation measures identified in this EIR would be required under the No-Project Alternative.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impacts That Would No Longer Occur** - Because the existing conditions would remain, none of the significant and unavoidable impacts identified in this EIR would occur under the No Project Alternative.

Relationship of the No Project Alternative to the Project Objectives

The No-Project Alternative would not achieve any of the proposed project objectives.

4.1.3 Environmentally Superior Alternative

An EIR must identify the environmentally superior alternative from the range of reasonable alternatives that are evaluated. Section 15126 (e) (2) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an environmentally superior alternative be designated and states that “if the environmentally superior alternative is the “no project” alternative, the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.”

Generally, the environmentally superior alternative is the one that would cause the fewest or least severe unmitigated impacts. In this case, the proposed G Street to 7th Street LRT project would result

in limited significant impacts after mitigation proposed project and would be superior to other alternatives, because it would allow a turn from the right lane of G Street to 7th Street to be made while maintaining a six foot (6 ft.) wide sidewalk at the corner of the Sheriff's building.

The proposed project alternative would extend the north-south Light Rail Transit couplet on 7th and 8th Streets one block north and operate in existing traffic lanes. An operational advantage would be that the proposed project alternative would allow northbound trains to wait for a southbound train to clear the single-track segment on 7th Street without blocking northbound trains.

4.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

In accordance with CEQA Guideline 15126.6 (c): “the EIR should also identify any alternatives that were considered by the lead agency but were rejected as infeasible during the scoping process and briefly explain the reasons underlying the lead agency's determination. Additional information explaining the choice of alternatives may be included in the administrative record. Among the factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an EIR are: (i) failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, (ii) infeasibility, or (iii) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts.” For example, if RT were to run a community bus along the MOS-1 alignment, instead of LRT, the costs of riding the bus would be significantly higher than riding the LRT, making this alternative infeasible. The following alternatives were considered and eliminated from further consideration in this EIR.

4.2.1 H Street to 7th Street LRT Alternative (Dedicated Track in East Lane of 7th Street)

This alternative turns into a dedicated bi-directional track offset 11 feet from the east curb of H and 7th Streets. This offset allows the 82-foot radius curve to clear the corner of the County of Sacramento's parking structure with a 30-inch clearance to the dynamic envelope of the train, and the offset would allow the County of Sacramento to re-fuel the 20,000 gallon fuel tanks in the east sidewalk closest to G Street. If a transition back next to the curb was used, it would require approximately 100 feet, and pulling the stop bar back that distance from the corner. Other variations of this option would be to swing out into additional lanes and pull their stop bars back as well, which would allow the sidewalk to be restored at the corner. This alternative involves restoring the sidewalk and removing a fenced bicycle area to permit the sidewalk restoration. This alternative was eliminated because the proposed offset would have minimal utility, and it would eliminate parking on both sides of the street, and one of the southbound lanes.

4.2.2 Other Alternatives

Another alternative considered and eliminated for the proposed project included building 7th Street to ultimate four lane width at ultimate profile with permanent double-tracks in traffic lanes; and building a shoo-fly temporary track outside of the 7th Street right-of-way. The widening of 7th Street will be completed by Thomas Enterprises as future phase of the Railyards Redevelopment Project. The schedule, final design and utility requirements for this improvement have not been determined. Due to this uncertainty, it would not be feasible to widen 7th Street before the installation of sufficient utilities to serve future development.

In addition, UPRR Track 150 crosses at-grade with this proposed project alternative. The Railyards Project is attempting to remove and replace Track 150, but it is not possible to have this track out of service before late 2010, which would conflict with the proposed project schedule. While the shoo-fly alignment might allow 7th Street to be widened, this track would conflict with future development and would require utilities to cross under a lower profile due to road profile changes. This option would require Regional Transit to finance improvements to 7th Street that would later be redesigned and

reconstructed as part of the Railyards Project. Therefore, this alternative was eliminated due to uncertainty of scheduling, design, utility requirements and its costs.