

CHAPTER 1.0: INTRODUCTION

This Final Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines (Section 15132). The Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) is the lead agency for the environmental review of the Downtown-Natomas-Airport (DNA) project and has the principal responsibility for approving the project. As a California special district, RT's action is subject to CEQA. This Final PEIR summarizes the expected environmental impacts resulting from approval and responds to comments received on the Draft PEIR.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PEIR

As described in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is an informational document for decision-makers and the general public that analyzes the significant environmental impacts of a project, identifies possible ways to minimize those impacts found to be significant, and evaluates alternatives to the project that could reduce or avoid adverse environmental impacts. Preparation of an environmental impact report is required prior to approving any project that may have a significant effect on the environment.

This document is the environmental analysis of the DNA project. It is a program-level analysis of the entire project – focused documents will be prepared for each individual segment as those projects are advanced to subsequent stages of project development. As a programmatic document, this analysis addresses the general environmental impacts of the DNA project as a whole based upon the general alignment adopted by RT in 2003.

As indicated in the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168), a PEIR can be prepared on a series of related actions that can be characterized as one large project. The DNA project is a series of related actions made up of individual segments that will be implemented over time. These actions are expected to be phased over a period of years depending on available funding. Tiering of environmental analyses is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is from a program-level to a project-level. This approach can eliminate repetitive discussions of the same issues allowing the later EIR to focus solely on the issues specific to the later project.

The Draft PEIR was circulated for public and agency review on December 28, 2007. The 60-day comment period closed on February 26, 2008. During the review period, the Draft PEIR was discussed at five meetings as follows.

- Presentation to the DNA Technical Review Panel on January 31, 2008.
- Presentation to the DNA Citizen Review Panel on February 1, 2008.
- Open Houses for the public on February 9, 2008 and February 11, 2008.
- Public Hearing with the RT Board of Directors on February 25, 2008.

The PEIR has been updated in response to comments received during the review period.

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE FINAL PEIR

The PEIR evaluates the environmental impacts of the entire DNA project to the greatest extent possible. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126), this PEIR

should be used as the primary document to evaluate all subsequent planning and permitting actions associated with the project. Subsequent actions that may be associated with the project are identified in Section 2.0 (Project Description) of the Draft PEIR (provided as an attachment to this document).

This document is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction – describes the scope of the document and objectives of the project
- Chapter 2: Executive Summary – updated from the Draft PEIR in response to comments received during the review period
- Chapter 3: Comments and Responses
- Chapter 4: Errata – presents changes that were made to the text of the Draft PEIR in response to public and agency comments. Correction and revisions to the Draft PEIR are represented by strike-through (~~strikeout~~) for deleted text and underlined (underline) for added text.
- Attachment – Draft PEIR. The updated Draft PEIR, including all appendices, is included on a CD as an attachment to this document. Changes from the Errata chapter are shown in ~~strikeout~~ and underline text.

1.3 INTENDED USES OF THE PEIR

RT's intended use of this document is to support a determination that the appropriate means of implementing transit improvements along the DNA Corridor is to construct a light rail system on the Truxel alignment. This document also will be used to support preparation of future project-level environmental documents. As described in the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168), a program-level document can be incorporated into future project-level documents to:

- Provide a basis for determining whether subsequent phases may have significant environmental effects;
- Help address regional influences, secondary effects, cumulative impacts, broad alternatives, and other elements that apply to the program as a whole; and
- Focus the subsequent evaluation on new effects that had not been considered before.

During future, project-level analysis of each phase, there is likely to be substantial participation by federal agencies. RT assumes that one or more future phases may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act, with the Federal Transit Administration as the federal lead agency and with additional participation by other federal agencies with regulatory authority over the DNA project.