



## Appendix H      Multilingual Communications Plan



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# STOCKTON **DIAMOND**

*Unlocking Northern  
California's Freight and  
Passenger Rail Potential*

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN  
JUNE 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

### Project Overview

The Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project is a critical element in the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission's (SJRRC) and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority's (SJJPA) vision to expand intercity and commuter rail service between the housing rich Central Valley and economic growth in the Bay Area, increasing the jobs to housing balance within the Northern California Megaregion. As our communities continue to grow and evolve, demands for increased goods and needed infrastructure for mobility continue to increase. Reliable travel options that link residents to jobs and other key destinations are critical as freeways and local roads become further congested.

Today, the tracks of two major railways intersect at-grade in the City of Stockton, one of the most congested rail bottlenecks in California. This at-grade crossing creates scheduling conflicts and operational inefficiencies for goods movement within the Valley and throughout the national railway networks. It also impacts interregional passenger rail operations and scheduling as they operate on the same rail lines. The project would grade separate Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway mainlines at the Stockton Diamond. The grade separation will improve freight movement, reduce delays, decrease fuel consumption and improve freight access to the Port of Stockton.

The Stockton Diamond grade separation would also enhance passenger rail operations, scheduling and create opportunity for expansion of service by allowing the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and San Joaquins passenger rail to connect to Sacramento and ACE to link to Merced. Expanded ACE and San Joaquins services provide improved connections between the California State Capitol, San Joaquin Valley and Bay Area regions. ACE, which has been in service for nearly 20 years, transports approximately 1.5 million riders annually on its route that currently originates at the Cabral Station in Stockton and ends at the Diridon Station in San Jose. The San Joaquins carry over 1 million passengers a year with rail service between Oakland, Sacramento and Bakersfield with an extensive Thruway Bus network, extending throughout the state.

### Project Purpose

The Stockton Diamond Project will improve freight and passenger rail operations, efficiency and safety while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions and California's carbon footprint caused by decreased vehicle and train idle times. The grade separation will greatly improve the private sectors ability to move freight through the Valley as part of the regional and national rail networks benefiting UP, BNSF, the Port of Stockton, and the Central California Traction Company. It will also reduce blockage and delays for pedestrians and motorists at key local road crossings.



**Project Benefits**

**Stimulate Mobility:** Improve regional freight and passenger rail efficiency and travel reliability by eliminating conflicting train movements

**Enhance Safety:** Improve access and safety for City of Stockton residents through bike, pedestrian and roadway improvements at ten at-grade crossings

**Economic Vitality:** Reduced delays and fuel consumption by increasing goods movement throughput and train velocity resulting in shipping cost savings

**Inspire Connections:** Support faster, more reliable passenger rail travel options and expansion of service linking travelers to employment and key destinations throughout Northern California

**Environmental Sustainability:** Improve air quality from reduction of congestion idling and number of trucks and personal vehicles traveling along regional freeways

**PARTNER AGENCIES**

The Stockton Diamond Project will require strategic collaboration and a strong public/private partnership. SJRRC is the lead agency for the project as well as the managing agency for the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA). The SJJPA is comprised of ten member regional government agencies responsible for protecting and promoting improvements of the existing San Joaquin Rail Service. SJRRC/SJJPA are working closely with the private entities of UP and BNSF as the railway owners/operators to identify feasible project concepts and solutions for the Stockton Diamond Project. These responsible agencies will also be working collaboratively with a larger partner agency group including the City of Stockton, San Joaquin Council of Governments, Caltrans, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) and others to share information, drive decisions and move the project forward. In addition, SJRRC/SJJPA are working closely to secure funding from the state and federal government in order to complete the Stockton Diamond project.

**COMMUNICATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

Finding a solution that meets the needs of all partners while also minimizing impacts to the surrounding communities will require strategic and proactive collaboration. Although the grade separation may occur mostly within rail right-of-way, future identified alternatives may impact neighborhoods, the surrounding street network and potential homeless encampments that sit adjacent to the rail lines. These diverse and disadvantaged communities consist of Latino, African American and Asian populations that will require targeted outreach as the project moves through design. In fact, nearly half of the area’s population is Hispanic and a quarter Asian, with one in five being native Spanish speakers. Also, despite the area’s economic



challenges, nearly 90 percent have access to the internet, mostly on cell phones, which they use to visit social media platforms, watch videos and search internet browsers. Therefore, in order to reach our intended target audiences it will be critical for SJRRC to create a multilingual and multifaceted communications program that aim to meet the following goals and objectives.

### Communications Plan Goals

- Provide project-specific timely and effective information at key milestones
- Build understanding, awareness and support for the project
- Provide opportunities for effective, valuable public engagement and input throughout the planning and environmental process

### Communications Plan Objectives

- Support an open and transparent planning process
- Implement required environmental justice noticing and public outreach activities
- Utilize multilingual traditional and online digital engagement strategies and tactics to broaden reach as well as connect with target audiences
- Engage key local and regional stakeholders as well as the general public
- Foster and maintain lasting relationships with key stakeholders and the general public while promptly addressing concerns as they arise

## COMMUNICATIONS/ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Technology and culture have drastically changed the way people seek information and communicate. Personal smart devices and an evolving culture that communicates through social media or other online outlets requires agencies to utilize targeted traditional and digital tools and tactics to reach audiences. With individual devices in most households (including low income, diverse communities and underserved neighborhoods), simple and user-friendly access to information and a desire to “share” everything now plays a key role in how we communicate.

This project requires a scalable communications program that flexes to project decisions and concepts refinement. Understanding that specific concepts may have greater impacts to specific audiences or communities, we must remain nimble in our communications and engagement strategies to ensure effectiveness in reaching all audiences identified including the hardest to reach populations within the study area.

Lastly, during unprecedented times such as the current COVID-19 health mandate for “social distancing” and quarantines, SJRRC and its partners must lean on engagement methods and strategies that allow the project to continue forward while creating effective dialogue with partners, stakeholders and constituents in the near-term (COVID-19 pandemic) and the long-term (post shelter-in-place mandates). We acknowledge that this current global crisis may have



lasting impacts to how we as a society function and interact. Garnering public participation and attention on infrastructure projects like Stockton Diamond may require adjustment of strategies in these evolving times. Asset mapping will be incorporated as part of our strategy to ensure we are reaching out to key individuals, organizations and causes within the study area.

While regular and ongoing communications will occur throughout planning efforts, there are **four** key milestones that will trigger a proactive communications program to share progress and seek informed input. At each key milestone the project team will work first with decision makers, followed by key stakeholder groups to test project messaging, set expectations and address concerns prior to engaging the general public. SJRRC will build stakeholder ambassadors as established and trusted community leaders to share project messaging as well as information and tools to their constituents to broaden our reach and maximize awareness.

### Key Project Engagement Milestones

- **Milestone 1: Kick-Off / Environmental Scoping** – Promote project and gather initial input
- **Milestone 2: Project Progress** – Maintain engagement and build understanding/awareness
- **Milestone 3: Draft Environmental Document Circulation** – Share project information and seek input on environmental document(s)
- **Milestone 4: Final Environmental Document** – Share information and build understanding/awareness regarding project’s next steps

### Communications Plan Components

- Identification of target audiences
- Development of key messaging and project brand
- Creation of tools and implementation tactics
  - Critical near-term tools and tactics for implementation during COVID-19 “shelter-in-place” orders
  - Long-term strategies to guide engagement through project approval
- Monitoring and documentation

## I. IDENTIFICATION OF TARGET AUDIENCES

### Social and Political Risk Assessment

Understanding our audiences is crucial to effective communications; therefore, the first step at the project’s onset will be to complete a social and political risk assessment to analyze key issues such as homelessness, economic development, small business impact, rail and related industry news/updates as well as local, state and federal political climate for this type of





infrastructure project. Key assessment areas will include an analysis of audiences and media, both traditional and social, recommendations to mitigate identified risks.

### Contact Database

Central to the Communications Plan is the identification and maintenance of a database that contains a diverse group of regional and local stakeholders, organizations, and project partners who may be interested, impacted and influential as well as property owners and/or occupants who reside within of the project alignment. The combined contacts will not only receive information about the project, but also be asked to partner with the project team to disseminate valuable information. The project contacts will continue to be communicated with through a variety of tools such as in-person discussions, presentations, distribution of media alerts or electronic information blasts as well as other project related materials. As the word spreads about the project, it is anticipated that the list of stakeholders and property owners/occupants may continue to expand.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF KEY MESSAGES & PROJECT BRAND

### Messaging Matrix

A messaging matrix will be maintained throughout the project to use as a resource for the project team. It will be first developed with initial messages and as the project progresses new messages will be identified and added that address concerns or questions. Messaging will educate generally about the project and its benefits as well as project elements such as alternatives, schedule, engagement opportunities, etc.

### Project-specific Brand

In order to maintain a consistent look and feel that will be recognizable and directly tied to SJRRC, a project-specific brand will be developed and carried on the project website as well as throughout all communication materials. The brand will catch the diverse audience attention in order to garner notice as well as memory and recognition. A project-specific Brand Style Guide will be developed to provide step-by-step instructions on the project identity.

## III. CREATION OF TOOLS & IMPLEMENTATION TACTICS

### Collateral Materials

Fact Sheet, FAQ, e-Blasts, Postcard Invitations, PowerPoint Presentations, Display Boards, Meeting Materials (comment cards, sign-in sheets, agendas/minutes), Project Maps/Renderings, Children's activity sheets, flyers/signage, etc.

### Project-specific Website

Interactive website with identifiable URL for easy recognition and navigation that allows for input submissions and database sign-ups via online forms.



### Online Public Meetings

Microsite linked to project website holding same information as in-person meetings including possible short welcome video, voiceover for further clarity, online comment card, and other unique visuals to explain project elements.

### Video Production

Animated videos to explain valuable project information in a fun and entertaining way.

### Social Media Campaign

Posts and advertisements via ACE's and San Joaquins' current social media platforms.

### Media Relations Strategy

Advertisements, editorial board outreach, bylined stories, news releases disseminated to local and regional media (i.e. Univision TV, Telemundo TV, Radio Lazer, Mundo Hispano, Asian Pacific American News, Latino Times).

### Stakeholder & Public Engagement

In-person and virtual briefings, meetings, large public forums such as public open houses or hearings.

In preparation for project kick-off and a project scoping period in summer 2020, there are a number of tools and tactics to be deployed that adhere to the current state of affairs and "shelter-in-place" orders for California residents. There are also additional strategies that address how to drive engagement throughout project approval.

As we think about the near-term engagement activities, we must consider how to effectively garner attention from target audiences as everyone is inundated with the following concerns and information.

- Primary focus on world health (i.e. social distancing, caring for families, etc.)
- Employment/financial impacts
- Access to commodities
- Uncertainty of future

Therefore, we must revamp existing tools/tactics and also deploy new tools/tactics designed to broaden our reach and create effective collaboration opportunities. This results in increased reliance on traditional activities such as mailers and telephone collaboration in conjunction with creative advertisement and virtual engagement.

The table below identifies the appropriate tool and tactic for both near and long term stakeholder/public engagement activities.



| STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES                                       |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| TOOL & TACTIC  | PURPOSE   | NEAR-TERM<br>(COVID-19 CRISIS)   | LONG-TERM   |
| Project Team Meetings  | Ongoing coordination, information sharing, decision making and documentation                  | <b>Promotion/Distribution:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephone, e-mail, SharePoint</li> </ul> <b>Engagement Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephone &amp; e-mail</li> <li>Conference calls</li> <li>Virtual Meetings (WebEx, Skype, GoTo Meetings)</li> </ul>                              | <b>Promotion/Distribution:</b><br><i>(same as near term)</i><br><br><b>Engagement Activity:</b><br>(in addition to near term) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-person briefings/meetings</li> </ul>  |
| Stakeholder Advisory Committee, Speakers Bureau, other stakeholder collaboration | Proactively bring project to stakeholders   | <b>Promotion/Distribution:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephone, mailers, e-blasts</li> </ul> <b>Engagement Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephone interviews</li> <li>Telephone Town-Halls</li> <li>Electronic notices/surveys</li> <li>Webinars (WebEx, Skype, GoTo Meetings)</li> </ul> | <b>Promotion/Distribution:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-blasts</li> </ul> <b>Engagement Activity:</b><br>(in addition to near term) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-person small briefings</li> <li>In-person organization presentations</li> </ul> |
| Public Meetings (including environmental)  | Provide project information to general public in multiple languages and opportunity for input | <b>Promotion/Distribution:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mailers, e-blasts, mobile ads, news releases, social media posts &amp; ads</li> <li>On-site signage at key areas (i.e. grocery stores, churches, transit, housing projects' management and child care centers, etc.)</li> </ul>                              | <b>Promotion/Distribution:</b><br><i>(same as near term with exception of on-site signage)</i>  |
|  |   | <b>Engagement Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online public meeting</li> <li>Comments submittal: electronic via website</li> </ul>  | <b>Engagement Activity:</b><br><i>(in addition to near term)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-person Public Open House (information stations,</li> </ul>   |



| STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| TOOL & TACTIC                              | PURPOSE   | NEAR-TERM<br>(COVID-19 CRISIS)   | LONG-TERM  |
|  |   | or email and hard copy via mail  | court reporter, staffing)  |
| Special Community Events                   | Proactively bring project to general public in multiple languages to show community support, distribute information and provide opportunity for input | <b>Promotion/Distribution:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile ads, e-blast, website notices, social media posts &amp; ads via event sponsors and other community-based organizations</li> <li>• On-site signage at key areas (i.e. grocery stores, churches, transit, housing projects' management and child care centers, etc.)</li> </ul> | <b>Promotion/Distribution:</b><br><i>(same as near term with exception of on-site signage)</i>   |
|  |   | <b>Engagement Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online surveys</li> <li>• Electronic notices</li> <li>• Live Facebook events</li> </ul>   | <b>Engagement Activity:</b><br><i>(in addition to near term)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff booth (in-person participation) at local sponsored events</li> </ul> |

#### IV. MONITORING & DOCUMENTATION

Accurate and ongoing measurement of communication and engagement activities will provide the opportunity to flex the Communications Plan as needed in order to meet identified activity goals. Any digital tools created will include analytics for measuring results and effectiveness, and any promotional campaigns implemented will be tracked for targeted reach and attendance.

In addition to ongoing measurement, summary reports will be developed following each key environmental milestone that highlights engagement and input received. At the conclusion of the project phase, a final summary report of the entire communications program efforts will be developed that captures all activities, deliverables, engagement results and input documentation.