



# STOCKTON DIAMOND



## DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT SUMMARY REPORT

Public Comment Period: March 15 – April 29, 2021



**CONTENTS**

**Introduction** ..... 1

    Overview..... 1

    Figure 1: Study Area Map ..... 1

    Project Purpose ..... 1

    Project Benefits..... 1

**Draft EIR Public Comment Period**..... 2

**Public Notification/Outreach** ..... 2

    Public Notice Advertisements..... 3

    Invite Mailer ..... 3

    Poster & Comment Card ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

    Media Relations ..... 4

    Website..... 5

    E-Blasts ..... 6

    Social Media ..... 6

    Citizen’s Guide / Brochure ..... 7

    Text Alert ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

**Public & Stakeholder Engagement**..... 7

    Bilingual Virtual Public Meeting ..... 7

    Stakeholder Presentations ..... 8

**Comments Submittal** ..... 8

    Comment Origin..... 8

    Comments Documentation / Review ..... 9

**Comment Themes**..... 9

**Next Steps** ..... 12

**ATTACHMENTS**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. Notice of Availability and CEQA Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal | F. E-blasts                             |
| B. Public Notice Advertisements  | G. Social Media                         |
| C. Invite Mailer & Database Methodology  | H. Citizen’s Guide/Brochures            |
| D. Poster & Comment Card   | I. Virtual Public Meeting Presentations |
| E. Media Relations   | J. Stakeholder Presentation             |
|  | K. Comments Matrix & Letters            |



## Introduction

The Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project is a critical element in the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission’s (SJRRRC) 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 at what is called the Stockton Diamond. This rail intersection, located just south of Downtown Stockton near Aurora Street South and East Scotts Avenue is the busiest, most congested rail bottleneck in California resulting in significant congestion and delays to service that moves valuable goods and people throughout the Central Valley as well as freight out to the larger national network. The existing crossing impacts reliability and efficiency of freight and passenger rail services that operate on the same rail lines. Train backups also cause local delays at crossing and potential vehicle, rail, bike and pedestrian conflicts.

## Overview

### PROJECT PURPOSE

Through a collaboration between SJRRRC and the private entities BNSF Railway (BNSF) and Union Pacific Railroad (UP) as well as regional partner agencies, the Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project (Project) proposes to identify feasible concepts that will separate the two rail lines with a flyover bridge 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.

### PROJECT BENEFITS

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

**Enhance Safety:** Improve Stockton residents’ access, safety, and mobility across rail lines through enhancements or closures at roadway-rail grade crossings

FIGURE 1: STUDY AREA MAP





**Economic Vitality:** Reducing delays will result in increased throughput and more efficient goods movement. This decreases fuel consumption and leads to cost savings

**Inspire Connections:** Support faster, more reliable passenger rail service linking residents to family, jobs and recreational destinations throughout Northern California

**Improve Sustainability:** Improve air quality through reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from trains and vehicles that idle due to congestion and delays

## Draft EIR Public Comment Period

In August 2020, SJRRC [California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency], in cooperation with the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) [National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Lead Agency], under delegation by the Federal Railroad Administration, officially launched the environmental process for the proposed Project with a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Assessment (EA). Following the Project's public scoping period from August 19 to October 3, 2020, comments were documented, reviewed and an environmental analysis was performed. A Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR was later released on March 15, 2021 announcing the commencement of the 45-day public review and comment period that ended on April 29, 2021. All interested parties were encouraged to provide input on the Draft EIR, which was supplemented by a bilingual virtual public meeting on April 6, 2021. The proposed Project was originally scoped as a joint CEQA/NEPA Environmental Document or Draft EIR/EA; however, the process was separated in February 2021 due to schedule and funding constraints. CHSRA is currently preparing the EA, which is anticipated to be completed and approved in fall 2020. The Notice of Availability and CEQA Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal can be found in **Attachment A**.

## Public Notification/Outreach

Several promotional tactics were deployed to build awareness about the Project, the availability of the Draft EIR, subsequent public review and comment period, and the bilingual virtual public meeting. Utilizing the established project website ([stocktondiamond.com](http://stocktondiamond.com)) and the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) social media following, the project team posted key information online to drive viewers to the Project website, and launched social media posts to promote Project activities and environmental milestones. Along with these established tools, the team reached out to local media publications, mailed to a large property owners/stakeholder database, sent multiple electronic notices, and conducted public and stakeholder engagement. The graphic below depicts a quick snapshot of the public outreach and engagement numbers during the Draft EIR public review and comment period. Further below are details on each outreach tool used.



# DRAFT EIR SUMMARY BY THE NUMBERS



# STOCKTON DIAMOND

Public Review & Comment Period: March 15 - April 29, 2021

## MULTIMEDIA REACH



136,500

Public Notices (via 2 Ads)

5,463

Bilingual Mailer Invites

233

News Release (1)

101,000

Email Contacts (13 e-Blasts)



8,666

Social Media (23 Posts 1 Ad)

3,128

Text Alert (1)

989

Website Users

## TOTAL REACH: 255,979

### PUBLIC NOTICE ADVERTISEMENTS

Two public notices for the Draft EIR public review and comment period were published in the Stockton Record on March 15, 2021 as well as in the Vida en el Valle on March 17, 2021. Copies of the public notice advertisements are included in **Attachment B**.

### INVITE MAILER

To announce the availability of the Draft EIR, the 45-day public review and comment period as well as promote the bilingual virtual public meeting, a bilingual (English and Spanish) notice with a perforated comment card was mailed on March 19, 2020 to 525 regional stakeholders and 4,938 property owners within a one-mile radius of the project site. Copies of the invite mailer and database



methodology are included in **Attachment C**. Extra copies of the mailer were also printed and delivered to eight repositories including:

- Café Coop (42 N Sutter St., Stockton, CA)
- California High Speed Rail Authority (770 L St., Suite 620, Sacramento, CA)
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Stockton (1106 N. El Dorado St., Stockton, CA)
- El Concilio (445 N. San Joaquin St., Stockton, CA)
- Restoration for Life Ministries (1234 Anderson St., Stockton, CA)
- San Joaquin County (44 N San Joaquin St., Stockton, CA)
- San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (949 E Channel St., Stockton, CA)
- Stockton City Hall (425 N El Dorado St., Stockton, CA)

### POSTER & COMMENT CARD

As an additional means to promote the Draft EIR public review and comment period, two bilingual posters and 25-30 comment cards were delivered/posted on April 6, 2021 at 13 repositories/ stakeholder locations in Stockton (see list below). A copy of the posters and comment card can be found in **Attachment D**.

- Cafe Coop (42 N Sutter St. #208, Stockton, CA)
- Catholic Chairities Stockton (1106 N El Dorado St., Stockton, CA)
- Cesar Chavez Central Library (605 N El Dorado St., Stockton, CA)
- Community Partnership for Families (CPFSJ): Dorothy L. Jones/CUFF Family Resource Center (2044 Fair St., Stockton, CA)
- Fair Oaks Library (2370 E Main St., Stockton, CA)
- Huddle Cowork by Launch Pad (110 N San Joaquin St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Stockton, CA)
- In-Season Market (215 E Alpine Ave., Stockton, CA)
- Maya Angelou Branch Library (2324 Pock Ln., Stockton, CA)
- Restoration for Life Ministries (1234 E Anderson St., Stockton, CA)
- San Joaquin County (44 N San Joaquin St., Stockton, CA)
- Stockton City Hall (425 N El Dorado St., Stockton, CA)
- Troke Library (502 W Benjamin Holt Dr., Stockton, CA)
- Weston Ranch Branch Library (4606 McCuen Ave., Stockton, CA)

### MEDIA RELATIONS

A news release was sent to 233 San Joaquin County media contacts. A copy of the news release is included in **Attachment E**.



WEBSITE

A project-specific website (stocktondiamond.com) was developed at the start of the project to act as the main hub of information for the public to learn about the project and receive updates. The website was updated regularly throughout the Draft EIR public review and comment period to provide timely information on outreach and engagement activities, including:

**989** total users  
**1,131** total visits  
**531** total direct access

Page	Sections
Homepage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added call to action button at the top of page “Draft EIR Now Available! Public Comment Period: 3/15 – 4/29” that hyperlinked to the Resources page</li> </ul>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated intro paragraph and CEQA/NEPA process steps</li> </ul>
Public Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added call to action button at the top of page “Join our Bilingual Virtual Public Meeting! Tuesday, April 6, 2021   6-7:30 p.m.” that hyperlinked to the Events section</li> <li>Added news release: SJRRC issues Notice of Availability of Environmental Document for Proposed Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project (March 15, 2021)</li> <li>Added Draft EIR public review and comment period details, including bilingual virtual public meeting and Draft EIR public review and Citizen’s Guide locations</li> <li>Uploaded Draft EIR and bilingual meeting materials, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Environmental Document</li> <li>Volume I (Executive Summary to Chapter 3.6)</li> <li>Volume II (Chapter 3.7 To Chapter 9)</li> <li>Appendix A – Stockton Background Documents Effecting Visual Quality</li> <li>Appendix B – Health Risk Assessment</li> <li>Appendix C – Supporting Biological Resources Information</li> <li>Appendix D – Construction General Permit Risk Level Determination Documentation</li> <li>Appendix E – Traffic Report</li> <li>Appendix F – Ab 52 Consultation Documentation</li> <li>Appendix G – Preferred Alternative and Concepts Eliminated</li> <li>Appendix H – Communications Plan</li> <li>Appendix I – Public Scoping Summary Report</li> <li>Notice of Availability (Mailer)</li> <li>Stockton Record Public Notice</li> <li>Vida En El Valle Public Notice</li> <li>Latino Times Notice (E-Blast)</li> <li>Poster (double sided in English &amp; Spanish)</li> <li>Citizen’s Guide (English)</li> <li>Citizen’s Guide (Spanish)</li> <li>Video Recording (English)</li> <li>PowerPoint Presentation (English)</li> <li>Video Recording (Spanish)</li> <li>PowerPoint Presentation (Spanish)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Resources	



All inquiries and comments that came through the website were documented and recorded as part of the Draft EIR public review and comment period.

### E-BLASTS

A total of 13 e-blasts were distributed during the 45-day scoping comment period to 101,000 contacts. Nine e-blasts were sent from [info@stocktondiamond.com](mailto:info@stocktondiamond.com) to the project’s stakeholder database list (400 contacts) providing project updates and reminders of the bilingual virtual public meeting and comment period. SJRRC forwarded three of the e-blasts to their ACE ridership of 600 contacts. Lastly, the Latino Times also sent an e-blast of the bilingual invite mailer to their list of over 100,000 readers. Copies of the e-blasts are included in **Attachment F**.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Throughout the Draft EIR public review and comment period, an extensive bilingual social media strategy was developed to educate the public about the Project and promote the release of the Draft EIR and public comment period. The outreach effort included use of ACE Rail’s Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. A copy of the social media plan and post content can be found in **Attachment G**.

**8,666** total reached  
on Facebook

**13,141** total impressions  
on Facebook & Twitter

Social media analytics during the Draft EIR public review and comment period included:

- **Facebook (Nine posts & one paid ad)**
  - **Advertisement (ran from March 15 – April 29)**
    - 5,142 impressions
    - 2,089 reach
    - 11 clicks
  - **Posts (six standard & three boosted)**
    - 6,577 reach
    - 414 engagements
    - 282 clicks
    - 104 likes
    - 6 comments
    - 20 shares
- **Twitter (Seven total tweets)**
  - 7,999 impressions
  - 93 engagement
- **Instagram (Seven total posts)**
  - 84 likes



### CITIZEN’S GUIDE / BROCHURE

A Citizen’s Guide (see **Attachment H**) was developed in both English and Spanish to serve as a quick reference about the Project including local benefits, key findings of the Draft EIR and details on how to submit comments. The guide condensed and streamlined very technical information with simplified content and graphics to visually tell the story to all publics. An electronic copy was distributed to key stakeholders via email blasts as well as posted on the project website and social media. In addition, hardcopies were made available at 16 locations throughout Stockton including the eight repositories listed above (under invite mailer) as well as:

- Cesar Chavez Central Library (605 N El Dorado St., Stockton, CA)
- Community Partnership for Families (CPFJSJ): Dorothy L. Jones/CUFF Family Resource Center: (2044 Fair St., Stockton, CA)
- Fair Oaks Library (2370 E Main St., Stockton, CA)
- Huddle Cowork by Launch Pad (110 N San Joaquin St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Stockton, CA)
- In-Season Market (215 E Alpine Ave., Stockton, CA)
- Maya Angelou Branch Library (2324 Pock Ln., Stockton, CA)
- Troke Library (502 W Benjamin Holt Dr., Stockton, CA)
- Weston Ranch Branch Library (4606 McCuen Ave., Stockton, CA)

### TEXT ALERT

A local Stockton realtor (and friend of a SJRRC employee) offered his services to send a mass text to local property owners regarding the Project. The Project team confirmed there were no privacy violations prior to the mass text being sent on April 20, 2021 to 3,128 property owners reminding folks to comment on the Draft EIR:

*[Name], if you have questions, comments, or concerns in regards to the Stockton Diamond Grade Separation, please visit [stocktondiamond.com](http://stocktondiamond.com) SJ Regional Rail Commission Reply STOP for opt-out.*

## Public & Stakeholder Engagement

### BILINGUAL VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

For public convenience, and to allow participation in a safe environment while social distancing, a bilingual (English and Spanish) virtual public meeting was held via Webex during the 45-day public review and comment period. Members of the public were encouraged to attend the bilingual virtual public meeting to learn more about the Project, interact with team members, ask questions and submit formal comments.



English Meeting	Spanish Meeting
<b>ONLINE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webex Link: <a href="https://bit.ly/SD_Meeting_English">bit.ly/SD_Meeting_English</a></li> <li>• Webex Password: SD_English</li> </ul> <b>BY PHONE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dial-in #: 408-418-9388</li> <li>• Dial-in Code: 187 558 2321</li> </ul>	<b>ONLINE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webex Link: <a href="https://bit.ly/SD_Meeting_Spanish">bit.ly/SD_Meeting_Spanish</a></li> <li>• Webex Password: SD_Spanish</li> </ul> <b>BY PHONE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dial-in #: 408-418-9388</li> <li>• Dial-in Code: 187 359 6057</li> </ul>

Those who needed additional accessibility preferences were directed to call the Project information line or send an email to [info@stocktondiamond.com](mailto:info@stocktondiamond.com). The PowerPoint presentation is included in **Attachment J**.

### STAKEHOLDER PRESENTATIONS

During the Draft EIR public review and comment period, the Project Team presented virtually via Zoom to five local community groups to discuss the Project and remind the groups to submit comments.

- Downtown Stockton Alliance (10 attendees participated on March 17, 2021)
- Rise Stockton (24 attendees participated on April 15, 2021)
- Stockton Rotary (35 attendees participated on April 21, 2021)
- Catholic Charities Healthy Neighborhood Collaborative (11 attendees participated on April 21, 2021)
- San Joaquin Partnership (15 attendees participated on April 22, 2021)

A copy of the general stakeholder PowerPoint presentation is provided in **Attachment K**.

## Comments Submittal

In an effort to provide convenience to interested participants, comments could be submitted through a number of different mediums during the Draft EIR 45-day public review and comment period. Comments submittal was established electronically through the website, Project email and the bilingual virtual public meeting. Comments were also able to be submitted via hard copy mailers that incorporated a perforated comment card or voicemail on the Project information line. The goal was to provide a feasible solution for all interested audiences for comments submittal. Overall, **26 comments** were submitted during the Project’s Draft EIR public review and comment period. A comments matrix including letters received during scoping can be found in **Attachment L**.

### COMMENT ORIGIN

- Nine letters (submitted via email to [info@stocktondiamond.com](mailto:info@stocktondiamond.com))
  - Two from state agencies:
    - Caltrans



- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - Seven from local agencies and organizations:
    - City of Stockton, Public Works Department
    - Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada (RailPAC)
    - Rise Stockton
    - San Joaquin Council of Governments
    - San Joaquin Regional Transit District
    - San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
    - Union Pacific Railroad
- Three emails to [info@stocktondiamond.com](mailto:info@stocktondiamond.com)
  - BNSF
  - Catholic Charities
  - City of Stockton, Municipal Utilities Department
- Four hotline calls
- Four mailed comment cards from property owners
- One bilingual virtual meeting comment from Little Manila Rising
- Five website comments

## COMMENTS DOCUMENTATION / REVIEW

A final step during the formal solicitation of comments during the Draft EIR public review and comment period is the collection, categorization and review of all input. Comments/input submitted during the 45-day period were documented and organized by category to allow for easy review by the project team and respective technical disciplines.

## Comment Themes

Of the 26 comments submitted during the 45-day scoping period from **March 15 to April 29, 2021**, the following comment themes were identified.

- **Aesthetics**
  - Vegetation barriers and aesthetic treatments
- **Agency Coordination**
  - Corridor transportation projects
  - Permits
  - Utility coordination



- **Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions**
  - Air quality analysis & impacts
  - Air quality project-related emissions
  - GHG emissions/reductions
- **Approval Process**
  - NEPA assignment MOU & FRA list of projects
- **Biological Impacts**
  - San Joaquin County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation and Open Space Plan consistency
  - Vegetation removal
  - Endangered and Special-Status Species
- **Community**
  - Business displacements
  - Community benefit agreement
  - Connectivity
  - Relocations
- **Concepts/Alternatives**
  - Right-of-way acquired
  - Train storage south of Tamien
  - Request for plans/designs depicting project
  - Drone video footage of project (visual animations)
  - Compatible with modernization of rail travel (higher speed designs)
  - Clearance specifications to support electrification of double deck trains
  - Hybrid option that depresses BNSF tracks
  - Support of the Build Alternative
  - Opposition of the project
  - Project improvement maintenance
- **Construction**
  - Traffic congestion & related impacts
  - Timeline
- **Environmental Justice**
  - Diverse audiences, community benefit
  - Homelessness
  - Economic Impacts
- **Freight Operations**
  - Current & future volumes



- Electrification
- Technology (locomotives, railcar movers)
- District rules and regulations
  
- **Funding/Costs**
  - Private/local contribution & funding sources
  
- **Health/Safety**
  - Rail crossings
  
- **Noise/Vibration**
  - Residents & property values
  - Analysis and impacts to residents
  
- **Outreach/Communications**
  - Communications strategy/plan & pandemic
  - Additional meetings with SWG, partner agencies and riders
  - Compensation for public participation
  
- **Passenger Service**
  - Expansion plans
  - Frequency increases
  - Station locations
  
- **Traffic/Transportation Circulation**
  - Local road impacts
  - Road closures
  - Bus facilities/routes
  - Traffic analysis and Impacts
  - Caltrans Complete Streets Directive
  - Pedestrian/bicycle facilities
  
- **Water Quality**
  - Plan consistency (State, Regional, Local)
  - 401, 404 Permits
  - MS4 Permit
  - Post construction Water Quality Measures
  - Permitting
  - Hydrology analysis and impacts
  - Local drainage



## Next Steps

SJRRC is currently reviewing input received during the Draft EIR public review and comment period to prepare the Final EIR, which is anticipated to be released and approved in summer 2021. CHSRA is concurrently preparing the EA for the proposed Project, which is anticipated to be completed and approved in fall 2021.