



ECOS

ENVIRONMENTAL
♦ COUNCIL ♦
OF SACRAMENTO

ECOS Transportation, Air Quality & Climate Change Committee
Thursday, December 7th, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Mogavero Architects, 2012 K Street, Sacramento

Meeting Notes

6:00 p.m. – Welcome, Introductions, Check-Ins, and Changes to Agenda

Attendance: Greg Thompson (EOS), Lynne Goldsmith, Craig Segall, Lilly Allen, Rick Bettis (Sierra Club etc.), Jim Porterfield (Climate Reality Project), Jon Ellison, James Cathcart, Delphine Cathcart (STAR), Betsy Weiland (SARA), Karen Jacques (STAR), Robert Coplín (Sac TRU), Wayne Michaud (Idle-Free CA), Alex Reagan (ECOS staff), John Deeter (co-chair).

Guest: Jim Allison (Capitol Corridor JPA).

- **Capital City Freeway Expansion**

Segall: Capital City freeway (SR 51) expansion is a massive highway project, estimated to cost \$500 million -- three times Regional Transit's annual budget. Current freeway has a choke point at the American River bridge causing congestion and considerable vehicle idling. Caltrans has not considered other options besides widening this freeway, such as improving transit or instituting congestion pricing. Widening SR 51 will just increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and move the bottleneck elsewhere.

This project is expected to be completed by 2023, but funding is uncertain. Currently no local match, and SBI funds are for repair not new projects. Caltrans is still accepting comments ahead of the planned EIR, and we need to address whether we want an expanded freeway through the city.

Deeter: We will try to get Caltrans to give TAQCC an update on Capital City freeway early next year.

6:05 p.m. – Design Considerations for Sacramento Valley Station (Short & Long Term)

Guest: **Jim Allison**, Manager of Planning, Capitol Corridor JPA

Deeter: The City of Sacramento is currently preparing a Master Plan for the Sacramento Valley Station and adjacent areas. Some of us are concerned that the City is focused more on development than on creating a viable transportation facility on this site. SVS is a major Amtrak station, ranking seventh nationwide in passenger volume.

Jim has been invited to help us understand what can be done to improve the existing facility in the short term and design a new one later on, perhaps within twenty years. The City plans to move the light rail platform and provide streetcar service within five years, but little else seems to be definitely planned. Currently the historic station is being used, but this requires about a 1,000 foot

walk to the platforms via ramps and stairs from a sub-surface tunnel but no elevators or escalators. Shuttle service using a powered cart provides access to the platforms for folks who are unable to walk to them. The current arrangement keeps people away from freight trains, and is a major improvement in safety from the old one where freight trains used tracks immediately adjacent to the platforms. Fifteen years ago when the new platforms were being planned, also moving the historic station was considered but found to be infeasible.

Allison: Long ramps are necessary to meet ADA requirements to maintain a gentle slope.

Discussion: How is SVS different than Berkeley and Jack London stations? **Allison:** Berkeley station is particularly unsafe, since passengers sometimes have to cross an active track to get to their platform. Most people walk to and from the platforms: Commuters generally don't have much baggage, just briefcases, and the powered carts can carry luggage to the trains for passengers who do. L.A. Union station has a similar design to SVS, but with more platforms and a longer tunnel. Capital Corridor ridership is growing at about five percent per year. City of Sacramento is responsible for designing the new facility, not Capitol Corridor JPA, and nothing is going to happen until development of the station area begins.

Deeter: Study in 2003 projected most people would arrive by car, either park or drop-off, with some walking or using transit. **Allison:** Mode split is changing: more coming by Uber/Lyft, transit and bicycle. SVS provides bike lockers, but many take bikes on board Capitol Corridor trains. In future checked storage is likely with increased demand for bike storage, but this will require staffing.

Deeter: (Shows schematics provided by the City for possible station designs.) All connecting bus service would be consolidated : Amtrak feeder service, Regional Transit buses, and other regional buses. Passengers would access the buses and light rail from above. Concourse providing access to the train platforms would be 33 feet up, possibly providing access to high speed rail (HSR) platforms another 20 feet higher. **Allison:** Stacking HSR above is not likely. Might be possible to move passenger facilities (including HSR) underground to allow for transversing the Sacramento River without a bridge. HSR might come through Midtown in a tunnel as well, sharing tracks with other passenger trains. **Comment:** Might then convert Midtown right of way into a linear park.

Discussion: How is parking provided for at SVS? Currently no structure but surface lots. Not everyone will be able to access the station by transit, so parking is necessary.

Allison: City wants to create sense of place at the station. Example is St. Pancras, with a long walk to station past many shops. Google is planning a transit oriented village at San Jose station. In Sacramento, concourse would also provide access to historic SP shops and new railroad museum.

6:45 p.m. – Letter of Support for New San Joaquin train service on Midtown line

All

Deeter: ECOS has been requested to provide a letter of support for a grant proposal for funding of new San Joaquin passenger train service on the Midtown (ex-WP) line. There would be four stops in Sacramento and another in Elk Grove. Major concerns have been raised about impacts on habitat by a proposed new station in Elk Grove for this service. This station would be located next to Stone Lakes Nature Refuge, more than two miles from downtown Elk Grove. This location appears to promote sprawl.

Union Pacific, which owns both rail lines to Stockton, won't allow more passenger trains on the eastern line running through historic Elk Grove and past Sacramento State since it wants to reserve this line for freight trains.

Discussion: *San Joaquin JPA is minimizing intercity services. Using the western alignment through Midtown won't permit service to SVS since there is no direct connecting track where the tracks cross near 19th & C streets, Lodi also needs a new station for this service. This is an interesting concept for multiple train stops in an urban area, and may also provide new service to the Bay Area using ACE service across the Altamont pass which currently terminates in Stockton.*

Action: *More discussion with Habitat 2020 about the habitat issues in Elk Grove. Habitat concerns may prevent an ECOS endorsement of this project.*

7:15 p.m. – Model Ordinance for Limiting Vehicle Idling for City of Sacramento

Wayne Michaud, Idle-Free California

Michaud: *Distributes a handout with background information about an ordinance for the City of Sacramento to prohibit prolonged idling by light-duty vehicles (LDVs).*

Discussion: *Much skepticism about the effectiveness of this sort of ordinance, particularly about enforcement. Suggestions that an educational campaign to encourage people to turn off auto engines whenever possible. This issue (including an educational campaign) was discussed some ten years ago in Sacramento, and nothing ever happened. Q: Is turning an engine off and on frequently a good idea? A: Yes, since the off-on cycle generally produces much less pollution than letting the engine run.*

7:30 p.m. -- Reports & Updates

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Electric vehicle program for City of Sacramento
- Transit & Sacramento Transportation Choices
- CapCity freeway expansion (Notice of Preparation)
- US 50 high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes (I-5 to Watt Ave)
- Sacramento County Climate Action Plan
- Other

7:40 p.m. – Other Business and Announcements / Possible topics for future meetings

7:45 p.m. (approx.) – Adjourn

Next TAQCC meeting: Thurs, Jan. 4th, 2018, 6:00 p.m., Mogavero Architects, 2012 K St.

Other upcoming events of interest:

Dec. 6, 6:30 pm -- Sac. Transit Advocates & Riders (STAR), 1714 Broadway

Dec. 9, 1 pm -- Sacramento Transit Riders Union, 1714 Broadway

Printable TAQCC agendas and minutes are available on the ECOS [Web site](#).