Coast Corridor Improvements

Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

From Salinas, CA to San Luis Obispo, CA

SCH# 2012081045

Prepared by the
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
and the
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
In Cooperation with the
Transportation Agency for Monterey County
and the
California Department of Transportation
Division of Rail and Mass Transportation

November 2015

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General Information About This Document

What's in this document?

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) have prepared this Final Program Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Final Program EIS/EIR), analyzing the potential environmental impacts of alternatives for physical and service improvements that would extend over the existing 130 miles of railroad between Salinas, California and San Luis Obispo, California. The project is located in Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties, California. The Final Program EIS/EIR describes why the project is being proposed, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, the potential impacts, and avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation strategies.

The Draft Program EIS/EIR was published and circulated for public review for 55 days from November 14, 2014, to January 7, 2015. Four public hearings occurred along the Coast Corridor during the public review period. SLOCOG and FRA addressed all substantive comments received on the Draft Program EIS/EIR in this Final Program EIS/EIR.

FRA has identified the Build Alternative with modifications as the Preferred Alternative for potential future rail improvements on the Coast Corridor between Salinas and San Luis Obispo. The Preferred Alternative is the same as the Build Alternative analyzed in the Draft Program EIS/EIR with the modifications listed below. These modifications are described in greater detail in Chapter 2.0, Alternatives and are adopted in the Final Program EIS/EIR based on comments received from local governments and the public. In general, the modifications will reduce the potential impacts of the project and can be categorized as follows:

- Changes requested by the City of King to siding extension and station area
- Exclusion of four curve realignments in San Luis Obispo County
- Inclusion of "island" CTC between McKay and Santa Margarita

This document also includes FRA's Record of Decision (ROD) for the project. In the ROD, FRA selects its Preferred Alternative, which is the Build Alternative with modifications as described above. FRA's ROD signifies completion of the programmatic NEPA review for the project.

For CEQA compliance, this document will serve as a Final Program EIR and will be available to individuals, elected officials, and agencies that commented on the Draft Program EIS/EIR for 30 days. Following this period, if SLOCOG decides to certify the environmental document and approve the Preferred Alternative, SLOCOG will publish a Notice of Determination.

Copies of the Final Program EIS/EIR will be available at www.slocog.org and the following locations:

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments Office
1114 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805-781-4219

Transportation Agency for Monterey County
55-B Plaza Circle
Salinas, CA 93901
831-775-0903

Copies of the document will also be available at several public libraries along the Coast Corridor. Refer to Chapter 5.0, Comments and Coordination, for a list of locations.

What happens next?

This is a programmatic environmental review that considers a comprehensive list of potential physical rail improvements, in addition to increased passenger rail service. Discussions and negotiations between SLOCOG, TAMC, FRA, other agencies, and the railroad owner (Union Pacific Railroad) will determine which physical improvements are carried forward. Further design refinements will also be necessary to inform any required project-level environmental reviews. Only after such further design and environmental reviews could construction proceed.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans, Attn: Joe Valdez, Division of Rail and Mass Transportation, P.O. Box 942873, MS 74, Sacramento, CA, 94273-0001; (916) 654-7188, or use the California Relay Service TTY number, dial 711.

SCH# 2012081045
District 5

Coast Corridor Proposed Rail Improvements – Salinas to San Luis Obispo

RECORD OF DECISION AND FINAL PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Submitted Pursuant to:
(State) Division 13, Public Resources Code—California Environmental Quality Act
(Federal) 42 U.S. Code 4332(2)(C) National Environmental Policy Act
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Railroad Administration

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments and Transportation Agency for Monterey County

11/10/15
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Abstract: The purpose of the proposed rail improvements to the Coast Corridor is to enhance safety and develop a faster and more reliable passenger and freight rail system that provides added capacity in response to increased travel demand between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and the cities in between. This Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) describes the purpose and need for the project, describes the project alternatives, analyzes the potential impacts, and identifies appropriate mitigation strategies to reduce these impacts. In its ROD, FRA selects the Preferred Alternative for potential future implementation on the Coast Corridor between Salinas and San Luis Obispo. Accordingly, FRA anticipates future project-level analysis and documentation as funding becomes available and that such analysis and documentation will further refine project design and will identify and refine the appropriate project-level mitigation measures.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AB – Assembly Bill

ABS – Automatic Block System

ARB – Air Resources Board

ARRA – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Authority – California High-Speed Rail Authority

CAA – Clean Air Act

CAFE – Corporate Average Fuel Economy

CA HSR – California High-Speed Rail

Caltrain – Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board

Caltrans – California Department of Transportation

CDFW – California Department of Fish and Wildlife

CEC – California Energy Commission

CEQ – Council on Environmental Quality

CEQA - California Environmental Quality Act

CNEL – community noise equivalent level

CO – carbon monoxide

CPUC – California Public Utilities Commission

CRCC – Coast Rail Coordinating Council

CSRP – California State Rail Plan

CTC – Centralized Traffic Control

CWR – continuous welded rail

dB - decibels

DOR – Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation

DPM – diesel particulate matter

EIS/EIR – Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report

FAA – Federal Aviation Administration

FERC – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

FRA – Federal Railroad Administration

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

FTI – Freight Train Interference

GHG – greenhouse gas

GIS – geographic information system

HC - hydrocarbons

HSC – Health and Safety Code

I-5 – Interstate 5

JPA – Joint Powers Authority

LOSSAN – Los Angeles—San Diego—San Luis Obispo

LOSSAN North – San Luis Obispo—Los Angeles Rail Corridor

LOSSAN South – Los Angeles—San Diego Rail Corridor

MP – mile post

MBUAPCD – Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District

MSAT – mobile source air toxics

NAAC – Native American Advisory Committee

NAAQS – National Ambient Air Quality Standards

NAICS – North American Industry Classification System

NEPA -- National Environmental Policy Act

NO_2 – Nitrogen Dioxide

NOI – Notice of Intent

NRCS – National Resource Conservation Service

O_3 - ozone

OTP – on-time performance

Pb – lead

PM_{10} – Respirable Particulate Matter

$PM_{2.5}$ – Fine Particulate Matter

PTC – Positive Train Control

PTI – Passenger Train Interference

RailOPS – ridership projections and operations modeling

ROW – right-of-way

RTC – Rail Traffic Controller

RTIP – Regional Transportation Improvement Plans

RTPA – Regional Transportation Planning Agency

RTP – Regional Transportation Plans

RWCQB – Regional Water Quality Control Board

VMT – Vehicle Miles Traveled

SDP – Service Development Plan

SIP – State Implementation Plan

SLOCOG – San Luis Obispo Council of Governments

SLORTA – San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority

SLOAPCD – San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District

SR – State Route

STB – Surface Transportation Board

STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program

TAC – toxic air contaminant

TAMC – Transportation Agency for Monterey County

TAZ – transportation analysis zones

TOD – Transit Oriented Development

TSM – Transportation System Management

TWC – Train Warrant Control

US – United States

US 101 – US Highway 101

USACE – US Army Corps of Engineers

US EPA – US Environmental Protection Agency

UPRR – Union Pacific Railroad

USC – US Code

USDA – US Department of Agriculture

USDOT – US Department of Transportation

USFS – US Forest Service

USFWS – US Fish and Wildlife Service