



Sacramento International Airport Transit Access Study

July 20, 2000



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Transit Service to the Sacramento International Airport

Introduction

For the last two years, transit access to the Sacramento International Airport has been identified as a regional priority by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments Board of Directors. The Board's goal has been to ensure that the airport continues to be served by public transit and that right of way be preserved to allow light rail to be extended to the airport. This report articulates the following policies of the SACOG Board of Directors:

- SACOG will continue to assist the Yolo County Transportation District in maintaining funding for its existing bus service to the airport.
- SACOG encourages the Sacramento Regional Transit District to develop a service between downtown Sacramento and the airport and to implement it in a manner that complements the current Yolobus service.
- SACOG encourages the Sacramento Regional Transit District to conduct a detailed analysis of the Downtown-North Natomas-Airport Extension as part of its Multi-Corridor Study and to strongly consider that extension as the next priority for fixed-guideway expansion.
- In light of the importance of this extension, SACOG encourages the Sacramento Regional Transit District to consider alternatives and determine the preferred alignment so that detailed planning for the extension can proceed.

Continuation of Bus Service to the Airport

Since July 1997, Yolobus (operated by the Yolo County Transportation District) has provided hourly service to the airport from both downtown Sacramento and the three major cities in Yolo County. This service is provided by Route 42, which serves as the basic intercity transit link between Sacramento, West Sacramento, Davis, and Woodland. Service to the airport is included as a stop between Woodland and Sacramento. The route operates as a loop with hourly headways in both directions.

In May 1997, the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) Board of Directors adopted a resolution that allowed the Yolobus service to operate between downtown Sacramento and the airport. The resolution included language asking SACOG to evaluate the service after it had operated for a period of time. In July 1999 the SACOG Board accepted a staff report summarizing the results of a survey of all passengers riding the route and an independent count of boardings and alightings by stop.

The analysis showed that about 9 percent of all passengers either boarded or alighted at the airport. Ridership on the overall service has grown over the course of the demonstration, as has the number of passengers using the airport stop. In May 2000, the service carried 47,179 riders for the month, compared to 43,394 in May 1999, and 36,400 in May 1998. Before the service was increased and extended to the airport, this route carried 22,989 riders in May 1997. Of the May 2000 riders, 3,767

boarded or alighted at the airport, which represents 16 percent of the increased riders since May 1997. The primary purpose of this bus route is to connect the four cities it serves. Because it is able to stop at the airport while en route between Woodland and Sacramento, it is able to provide airport service at a relatively modest incremental cost.

This service was funded by SACOG as a demonstration project using federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality funds. These types of funds cannot be used as an operating subsidy for more than three years. In light of the success of and need for transit access to the airport, SACOG has assisted the Yolo County Transportation District in developing sources of funding to continue the service beyond the three-year demonstration. At this point, it appears that the necessary funds will be available directly through the Governor's Budget for four years. *SACOG will continue to assist the Yolo County Transportation District in maintaining funding for this service.*

Potential Expansion of Bus Service to the Airport

The I-80 Corridor Investment Strategy—scheduled for adoption by SACOG in July 2000 and by the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency in August 2000—calls for bus service to the airport to be expanded to provide service every 30 minutes to and from downtown Sacramento. The Yolobus service currently provides 60-minute service. *SACOG will encourage the Sacramento Regional Transit District to develop a service between downtown Sacramento and the airport and to implement it in a manner that complements the current Yolobus service.*

Potential Extension of Light Rail to the Airport

In the early 1990s, RT conducted the Systems Planning Study in which it evaluated numerous potential extensions of its “starter line” light rail system. The Downtown Sacramento-Natomas-Airport extension was one of the recommended lines and a Route Refinement Study was completed to define the specific route. RT's Transit Master Plan of 1992 included this extension and it was then included in SACOG's 1993 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

The light rail extension was subsequently removed from the MTP—not for lack of support, but because new federal regulations required that the MTP be constrained to those projects that could reasonably be expected to be funded. At that time, funds were severely constrained and the South Line and Folsom Extension were the region's priorities for light rail. Those lines are now funded and RT and SACOG have funded a Multi-Corridor Study to determine where the next fixed-guideway project should go.

The preliminary results of the Multi-Corridor Study indicate that the North Natomas/Airport extension via Truxel Road might attract the largest number of new transit riders of 19 possible corridors studied. Taking into account 12 technical criteria and the weights applied to these criteria by a stakeholder review panel, this extension rated third of the 19 corridors in the preliminary analysis. The North Natomas Community Plan includes a land use pattern that has the potential to be highly supportive of transit; an early commitment to this extension—and to a specific alignment—would help ensure that those land use patterns are implemented. *Given the importance of the Sacramento International Airport*

as a regional destination and the early results of the Multi-Corridor Study, SACOG encourages the Sacramento Regional Transit District to advance the North Natomas/Airport Extension to a more detailed stage of analysis as part of its Multi-Corridor Study and to strongly consider that extension as the next priority for fixed-guideway expansion.

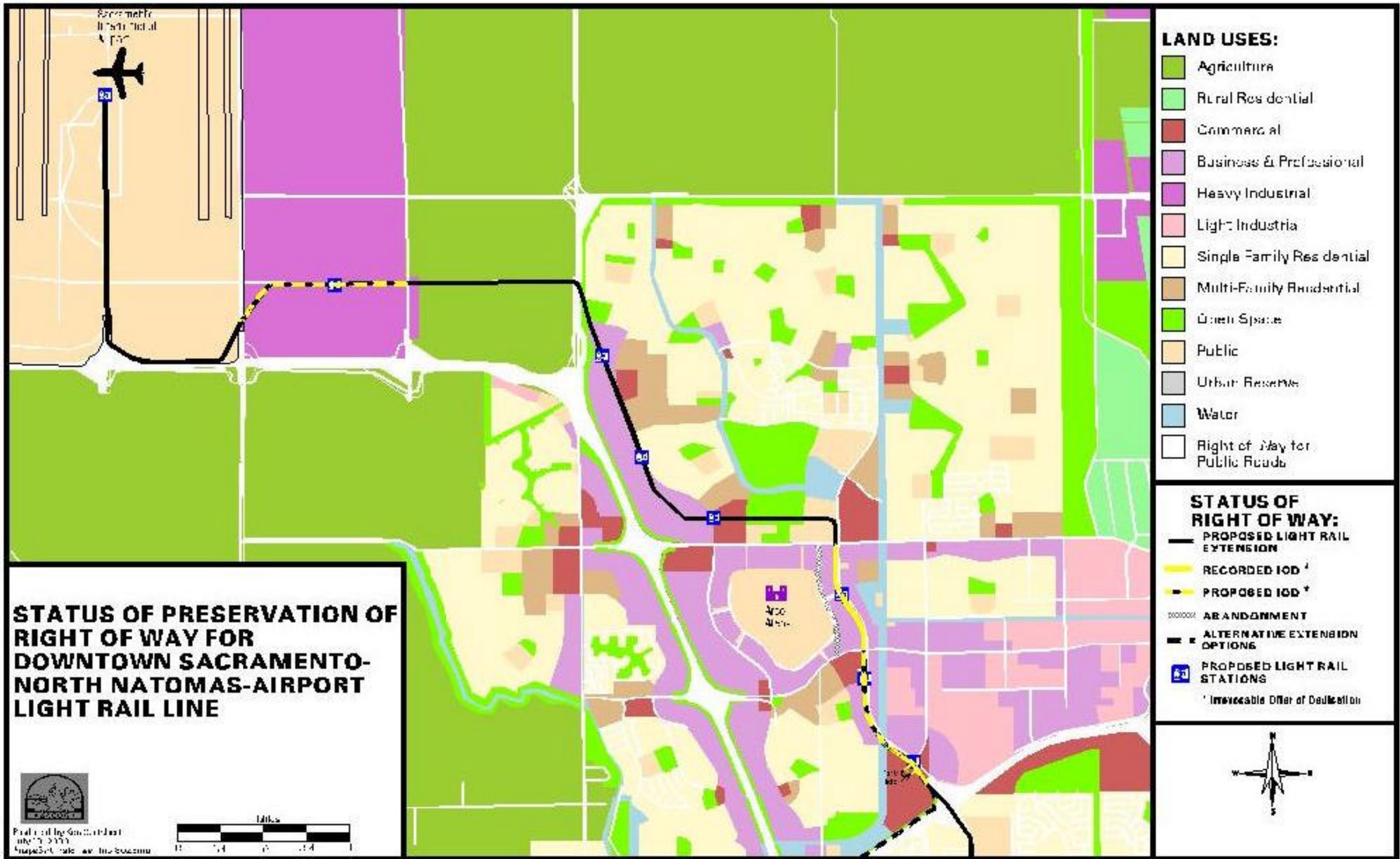
Status of Preservation of the Right of Way for Light Rail to the Airport

SACOG has worked with RT and others to assess the status of efforts to preserve the alignment that was identified in the Route Refinement Study for the Downtown Sacramento-Natomas-Airport extension. [Map 1](#) indicates the sections of the alignment north of I-80 for which Irrevocable Offers of Dedication (IOD) have been recorded. There are two such locations; in a third location—the Metro Air Park—an IOD has been drafted, but not recorded. In other locations on [Map 1](#), subdivision maps have not yet been submitted. As subdivision maps are submitted, planning staff for the City of Sacramento advise RT so that IODs can be developed. The right of way is depicted in the North Natomas Community Plan. Within the airport property, right of way has been set aside. More detailed plans will be developed over the next year, as the Department of Airports prepares a new Master Plan for the Sacramento International Airport.

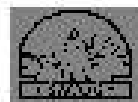
[Map 2](#) depicts the alignment south of I-80, which is included in the City of Sacramento’s General Plan. The map also depicts two alternative alignments that are under consideration in the Multi-Corridor Study. Most of the alignment here is within current public rights of way; accordingly, no IODs have been recorded. IODs may be needed within the Railyard Redevelopment Area. The Truxel alignment would include a new crossing of the American River Parkway; because the last Parkway Plan update was completed in 1985, the light rail alignment is not shown on the Plan. If this alignment is pursued, it will need to be included in the next update or an amendment of the Parkway Plan, either of which would need to be approved by state legislation. All of the right-of-way information is based on information known to SACOG as of June 30, 2000; the status of the right-of-way will continue to be monitored. *In light of the importance of this extension, SACOG encourages the Sacramento Regional Transit District to consider alternatives and determine the preferred alignment so that detailed planning for the extension can proceed.*

Conclusion

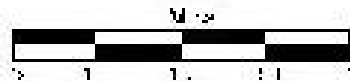
The recommendations in this report are intended to emphasize the importance of transit access to the Sacramento International Airport. In the short term, the existing service needs to be continued. In the mid term, bus service to the airport should be expanded to provide at least 30-minute service to downtown Sacramento. In the long term, fixed-guideway service—either light rail or some form of enhanced, expedited bus operation—should connect the airport to downtown Sacramento. And to achieve the long-term objective, the alignment needs to be carefully preserved.



**STATUS OF PRESERVATION OF
RIGHT OF WAY FOR
DOWNTOWN SACRAMENTO-
NORTH NATOMAS-AIRPORT
LIGHT RAIL LINE**



Prepared by: Kim Anderson
Date: 10/2002
Project: SR 99/160/161/162/163/164



- LAND USES:**
- Agriculture
 - Rural Residential
 - Commercial
 - Business & Professional
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Light Industrial
 - Single Family Residential
 - Multi Family Residential
 - Open Space
 - Public
 - Urban Reservoir
 - Water
 - Right of Way for Public Roads

- STATUS OF
RIGHT OF WAY:**
- PROPOSED LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION
 - EXISTING LIGHT RAIL
 - ALTERNATIVE EXTENSION OPTION
 - PROPOSED LIGHT RAIL STATIONS

