



REPORT TO COUNCIL

City of Sacramento

80

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2604
www.CityofSacramento.org

Staff Report
June 26, 2007

Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

Title: Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan (M05-061)

Location/Council District: The quarter-mile radius around each of three Regional Transit Light-Rail Stations in North Sacramento: Globe, Arden/Del Paso, and Royal Oaks. Districts 2, 3

Recommendation: Adopt a **Resolution** accepting the Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan.

Contact: Brian Abbanat, Associate Planner 808-7584; Fedolia "Sparky" Harris, Senior Planner 808-2996

Presenters: Brian Abbanat, Associate Planner; Mukul Malhotra (Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.)

Department: Planning

Division: Long Range Planning

Organization No: 4912

Description/Analysis

Issue: The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan consists of urban design plans; infrastructure needs analysis, and market analysis to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) within the quarter-mile radius of the Globe, Arden-Del Paso, and Royal Oaks light rail stations in North Sacramento.

Policy Considerations: The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan is consistent with the City's Strategic Plan to promote economic development and improve sustainability and livability. For specific policies to which this project is consistent, refer to Attachment 1.

Environmental Considerations: The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan is statutorily exempt from CEQA per Section 15262 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The project involves the preparation of planning studies for possible future actions by the City Council. The City has not yet approved, adopted, or funded these future actions and; therefore, approval of the Plan will not result in the approval, adoption, or funding of these actions.

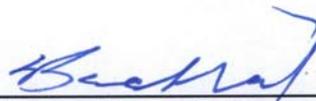
Furthermore, as it contains only guidelines for development, adoption of the Northeast Light Rail Stations Plan does not have a legally binding effect on future actions.

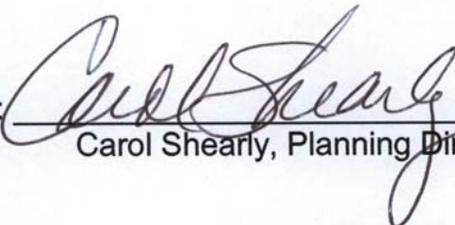
Commission/Committee Action: The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan was presented to the Planning Commission on 4/19/07 for review and comment. No formal action was taken. On 5/2/07, it was brought to the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Commission as an informational item. On 6/8/07 an informational memo was submitted to the Regional Transit Board of Directors.

Rationale for Recommendation: The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan supports all City policies outlined in the "Policy Considerations" section of Attachment 1.

Financial Considerations: Not applicable

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): Not applicable

Respectfully Submitted by: 
Brian Abbanat, Associate Planner

Approved by: 
Carol Shearly, Planning Director

Recommendation Approved:


Ray Kerridge
City Manager

Table of Contents:

	Report	pg. 1
Attachments		
1	Background	pg. 3
2	Resolution	pg. 7
	Exhibit A-Project Boundary Map	pg. 8
3	Vicinity Map	pg. 9
4	Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan Powerpoint Presentation	pg. 10

ATTACHMENT 1

Project Background

The purpose of the Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan is to promote implementation of the conceptual transit-oriented development (TOD) vision contained in the Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) project completed by the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) in collaboration with the City of Sacramento and various stakeholders. The TLC process was a major effort, developed through extensive community participation that proposed station-specific, transit-supportive, land use plans around light rail stations. These land use plans envision development of vacant and underutilized sites with higher density housing, mixed use and supportive retail, and other civic and community uses.

The TLC project is a report and recommendations conducted by Regional Transit in 2002 to assess the TOD market potential around their light rail stations. City Council adopted the TLC recommendations in October 2002 (Res. 2002-694). The recommendations for the project area stations represent a bold vision for TOD-based community revitalization and investment. Recommendations emphasize walkable design, efficient land use, and large-scale mixed-use transit village development including office, housing and neighborhood-serving retail and aggressive joint development on RT owned property. When the plans are successfully implemented, vibrant urban villages will be created linking jobs, housing and shopping opportunities and help address the region's growing transportation and air quality problems.

The goal of the Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Infrastructure Needs Assessment and Urban Design Plans is to identify infrastructure and public improvements that realistically could be implemented to encourage transit-oriented development, increase pedestrian and bicycle movement in the area, and create a vibrant urban village. The proposed project aims to overcome infrastructure and market barriers to development in the station areas by taking advantage of their locations within the North Sacramento Redevelopment Project area to leverage financial resources.

Generally, the Globe, Arden/Del Paso, and Royal Oaks Station areas can be characterized as having inadequate public infrastructure, underutilized and vacant parcels, and incompatible or inadequate land uses for TOD. Each station is adjacent to either Del Paso Boulevard or Arden Way, both of which are high volume roads. Traffic calming measures and safe pedestrian connections are deficient for each of the stations.

In addition to a lack of pedestrian access, general conditions in the area further discourage pedestrian utilization of the transit station. The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) offices, the popular Del Paso Boulevard art community, and historic urban design offer a glimpse of TOD and transit ridership potential that could be realized with implementation of appropriate connective infrastructure and design improvements and resultant economic development benefits to the area.

TOD is a concept that links land use development around transit stations in a manner that improves ridership on transit lines. TOD areas are characterized as having higher densities, a mix of land uses and housing types, and quality design oriented to the pedestrian within a quarter-mile radius area of a transit stop. Utilizing these objectives, TOD would increase transit ridership and therefore decrease air pollution by providing citizens with a transportation alternative to the automobile.

The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan promotes implementation of the aforementioned TLC land use concepts completed in Summer 2002 by RT. The Globe, Arden/Del Paso, and Royals Oaks light rail stations are logical locations for this urban design plan considering the reemerging Del Paso Boulevard, close proximity to Downtown, and generous acreage of vacant and underutilized property, particularly around the Globe and Royal Oaks stations. The three station areas contain a wide variety of land uses including heavy industrial, commercial, single-family residential, multi-family residential and vacant parcels. Overall, in addition to vacant lots, many other parcels are underutilized. An estimated 20 percent of the parcels within an approximately half-mile radius around the stations are either underutilized or vacant. General conditions in the area around the three light rail stations are adequate to meet the definition of blight under California Redevelopment Law, and as such, the areas were included in the North Sacramento Redevelopment Project area adopted by the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) in 1992.

Since March 2006, Planning Department staff has been working on an urban design plan, infrastructure analysis, and market analysis to encourage TOD around the Globe, Arden/Del Paso, and Royals Oaks light rail stations consistent with the TLC project. Parallel objectives include increasing pedestrian and bicycle movement, creating active urban villages, and taking advantage of the stations' location within the North Sacramento Redevelopment Project area to leverage financial resources. Major project deliverables include an urban design/streetscape plan, economic analysis, and an infrastructure needs assessment to guide future investment towards these ends.

The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan document consists of three volumes (located at: S:\LongRange\Transportation\M05-061 Northeast Line Light Rail Stations\Meetings & Reports\City Council\6-26-07\Separated Plan). Volume I establishes existing conditions and planning strategies for encouraging TOD in the project area. Volume II details the urban design guidelines and streetscape improvements that will shape the character of the public realm as well as an overview of infrastructure requirements. Volume III is the Appendix and includes a summary of the Community Workshops, details of the infrastructure report, market and pro-forma analysis, traffic circulation technical memorandum, and a preliminary environmental checklist identifying future studies needed for CEQA compliance.

The North Sacramento Commercial and Residential Design Guidelines were recently adopted in September 2006. However, several factors make the Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan unique and justify this effort. First, the plan tailors the nature of development around the stations by designing an individual "sense of place" for each station area. Second, specific building prototypes and development intensities

appropriate for the stations are identified. Third, the unique architectural character of Del Paso Boulevard is recognized and complemented. Fourth, policy recommendations are made for future adoption to encourage transit-oriented development. Fifth, the plan extends beyond the private realm and recommends substantial improvements to the public realm, including pedestrian circulation, within the project boundaries. Finally, the plan identifies obstacles to TOD development through both a market analysis, which reacts by grounding the development prototypes in reality, and an infrastructure needs assessment which identifies necessary infrastructure improvements and costs to accommodate TOD in the project area. Thus, a comprehensive approach was taken to the urban design plan and sets the stage for future planning phases.

Planning staff intends to follow through with this plan by pursuing avenues for implementation with interdepartmental and interagency project partners. Additional work may include a dedicated land use plan and/or rezoning consistent with the TLC recommendations, environmental analysis, and a funding/finance strategy to comprehensively set the stage for transit-oriented development in the project area. Such efforts were not possible with this project due to funding constraints.

Public/Neighborhood Outreach and Comments: The project's vision has been largely community driven and results from a series of five well-attended public workshops. During the first phase of workshops, community members helped determine a unique identity for each station, which was distilled into preliminary design concepts and a framework for future development. These concepts were translated into designs and presented to the community at the second workshop, enabling the participants to visualize future improvements. At the final workshop, a review of the draft plan, its policies, design guidelines, and infrastructure issues was presented to the community. The workshop concluded with a consensus of support for the plan.

Public outreach for this project was multi-faceted:

- Stakeholder interviews were conducted early in the project and included property owners, business owners, developers, and political representatives.
- Prior to each Community Workshop, staff mailed flyers to a nearly 3000 record database, posted door flyers on all residences, distributed flyers to all students at Woodlake and Northwoods Elementary Schools, sent e-mail notifications to an electronic mailing list, posted A-frame signs at the light rail stations, and walked Del Paso Blvd to directly communicate with businesses/property owners and engage them in the project.
- Periodic presentations and updates were given to the North Sacramento Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Del Paso Boulevard Business Improvement District meeting, North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, Point West Transportation Management Association, and Councilmember Sheedy's Dixianne and Woodlake Neighborhood Community Workshops.

Policy Considerations: The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations plan is consistent with the City's Strategic Plan to promote economic vitality and improve sustainability and livability. Additionally, it addresses the following specific policy considerations:

- It presents a strategic opportunity to transform the North Sacramento community into a vibrant, mixed-use transit district; and
- Supports the General Plan Update's Vision and Guiding Principles; and
- Promotes implementation of the conceptual TOD vision contained in the Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) project completed by the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT); and
- Maintains consistency with the SACOG Blueprint and its Growth Principles; and
- Supports city policy to promote alternative modes of transportation; and
- Supports city policy to revitalize commercial corridors; and
- Promotes employment, commercial, and housing needs in the plan area; and
- Promotes redevelopment around light rail stations with compact and diverse land uses; and
- Provides broad community participation in order to gather the opinions of those residing both inside and outside the project boundaries; and
- Promotes improved mobility and circulation of all transportation modes in the project area.

Land Use: The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan does not propose changes to current land use designations or zoning. Future planning efforts, including the General Plan Update currently underway, will be required to focus on analyzing land uses around the light rail stations and appropriate zoning to facilitate implementation of the urban design/streetscape plan presented here.

RESOLUTION NO.

Adopted by the Sacramento City Council

NORTHEAST LINE LIGHT RAIL STATIONS PLAN (M05-061)

BACKGROUND

The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan:

- A. Applies to the parcels within the quarter-mile radius around the Globe, Arden-Del Paso, and Royal Oaks light rail stations in North Sacramento; and
- B. Was initiated in February, 2006 to promote implementation of the conceptual transit-oriented development (TOD) vision contained in the Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) project completed by the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) in collaboration with the City of Sacramento and various stakeholders; and
- C. Presents a strategic opportunity to transform the North Sacramento community into a vibrant, mixed-use transit district; and
- D. Supports the General Plan Update's Vision and Guiding Principles; and
- E. Maintains consistency with the SACOG Blueprint and its Growth Principles; and
- F. Supports city policy to promote alternative modes of transportation; and
- G. Supports city policy to revitalize commercial corridors; and
- H. Provides broad community participation in order to gather the opinions of those residing both inside and outside the project boundaries; and
- I. Promotes improved mobility and circulation of all transportation modes in the project area.

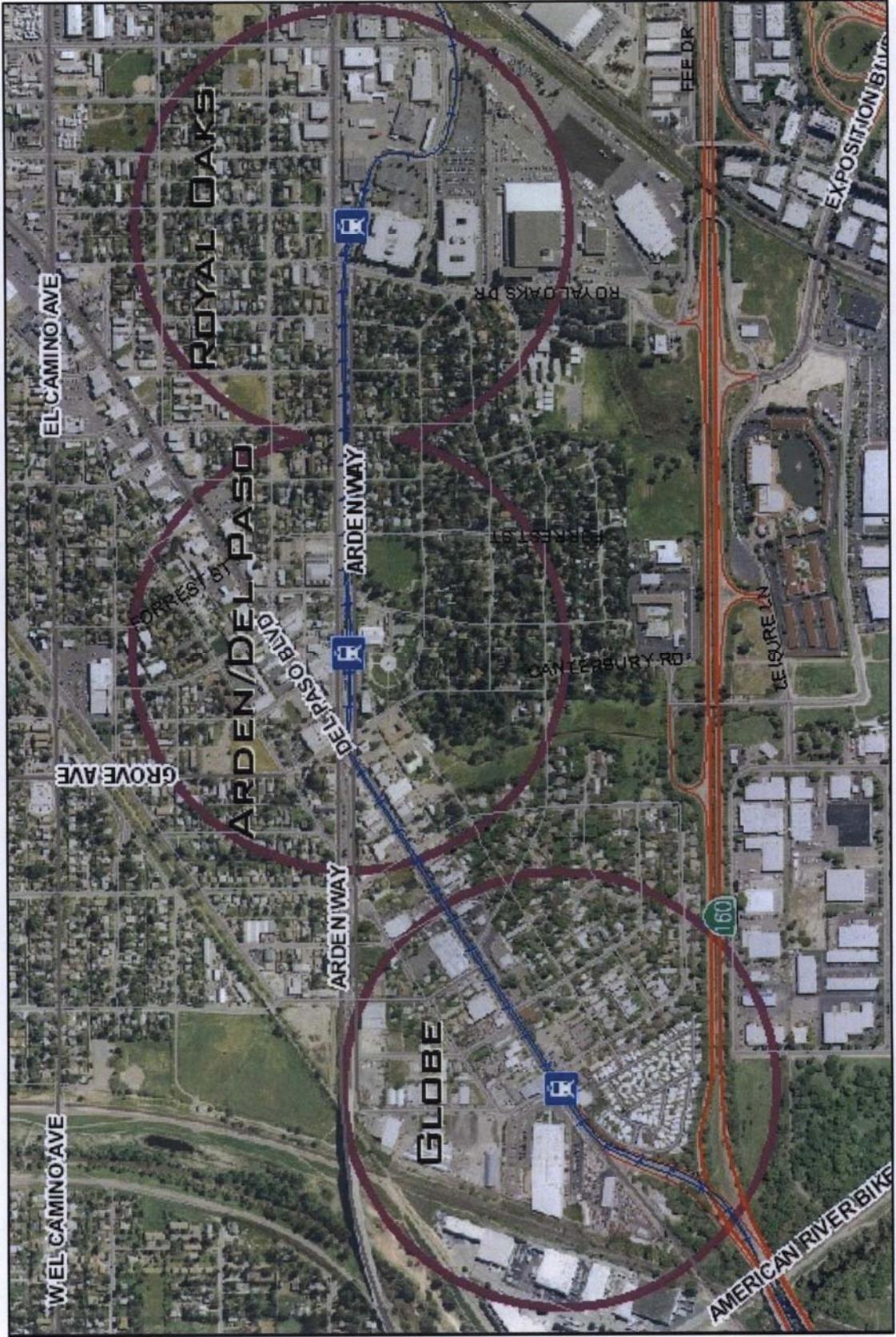
BASED ON THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE BACKGROUND, THE CITY COUNCIL RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan is accepted as the guiding vision for development within the quarter-mile radius around the Globe, Arden/Del Paso, and Royal Oaks light rail stations.

Table of Contents:

Exhibit A – Map of Northeast Line Light Rail Stations Plan project boundary.

EXHIBIT A
Project Boundary



**ATTACHMENT 3
VICINITY MAP**

*Globe, Arden/Del Paso, and
Royal Oakes Light Rail Stations
General Location Map*

