

**FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS
OLD SACRAMENTO STATE HISTORIC PARK GENERAL PLAN
MAY 2, 2014**

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15092, 15093 and 15096(h), the California Department of Parks and Recreation hereby finds for the reasons set forth below, that the social, educational, recreational and economic considerations of the proposals contained in the Old Sacramento State Historic Park (OSSHP) General Plan and its implementation outweigh the potential adverse environmental effects that implementation of the plan may cause.

As set forth in the preceding sections, the State Park and Recreation Commission's approval of the OSSHP General Plan and certification of the associated EIR by the Director of State Parks will result in two significant and unavoidable environmental impact related to noise: 1) long term noise related to rail operations; and 2) noise related to adjacent land uses. Implementation of the General Plan will also result in a significant impact related to short-term noise related to project construction. However, implementation of Mitigation Measure Noise-1 contained in the MMRP for the OSSHP General Plan will reduce short-term noise impacts related to project construction to less than significant.

Mitigation Measure Noise-2, also contained within the MMRP, will help reduce noise impacts from long-term noise levels related to rail operations. However, even with implementation of Mitigation Measure 2, the potential for significant noise impacts related to horn blasts at public at-grade crossings and noise from pass-by trains resulting from the proposed expansion of the excursion train operations would remain. The EIR found that feasible mitigation measures to reduce this impact to less than significant are not available, and thus the impacts remain significant and unavoidable. Because implementation of the General Plan, specifically the expansion of excursion train operations, would introduce a new noise source in excess of applicable impact criteria, and because no feasible mitigation exists to reduce this impact to less-than-significant, the impact of noise related to incompatible land use was also found to be significant and unavoidable.

All other potentially significant impacts that would result from implementation of the General Plan related to aesthetic resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, public services, transportation and traffic, and utility and service systems would be less-than significant as a result of implementing specific goals and guidelines contained in the OSSHP General Plan. Specific goals and guidelines to be implemented are noted in the impact analysis for each resource topic and are also included in the MMRP for informational purposes.

The adoption of the General Plan memorializes the commitment of State Parks to avoid adverse environmental effects to the greatest extent feasible, while providing opportunities for recreation, interpretation, and education. This is the first General Plan

for OSSHP. The General Plan provides for the implementation of adaptive management strategies to protect resources and to keep environmental effects at a minimum. For example, adaptive management allows State Parks to eliminate train horns and whistle sounding at commencement or conclusion of travel at the proposed Sacramento Zoo stop.

In addition, the General Plan/EIR is the first tier of a multi-tiered California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process as defined in Section 15169 of the CEQA guidelines. All subsequent plans and projects will be subjected to further CEQA analysis and regulatory requirements, and may result in additional mitigation measures to further reduce impact, as more specific project details become known.

In addition to the above efforts, State Parks will:

- Consider potential noise and land use compatibility issues during future planning efforts;
- Continue to work with the local community potentially affected by the expansion of excursion train operation to minimize adverse effects; and
- Incorporate new technology and Best Management Practices related to train operations, as applicable.

State Parks has made changes to the Preliminary General Plan/Draft EIR in the FEIR to provide all currently known details related to the proposed excursion train expansions in one place (see page 4-20 of the General Plan) to help reviewers better understand the details of the proposed operations. Master Response 9 – Excursion Train Information – in the Final EIR also explains these details. None of these revisions for clarification resulted in changes to the impact conclusions or proposed mitigation included in the Preliminary General Plan/Draft EIR.

State Parks is committed to implementing management strategies to reduce impacts from operational noise of excursion trains on adjacent neighborhoods. State Parks recognizes, however, that this is not always a straight forward and easy task. Trains are noisy by nature and some adjacent neighbors may find noise related to trains offensive. Implementing the excursion train expansions outlined in the OSSHP provides State Parks with an excellent opportunity to use its existing assets to expand visitor services, provide additional recreational opportunities, achieve its interpretive and educational goals related to the railroad zone, and create an additional source of revenue.

The Commission finds that the General Plan will have the following economic, social, and cultural benefits that render acceptable the potential significant and unavoidable effects related to excursion train noise.

1. Preserves cultural resources

Historic buildings in OSSHP will be protected and preserved for their historic values and collectively for their national significance and reconstruction of any new buildings will be consistent with the Old Sacramento National Historic Landmark District and the Secretary of the Interior Standards. The General Plan provides

guidelines for management and appropriate adaptive uses of these historic structures, consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The General Plan also contains goals and guideline for the protection of archeological resources.

2. Improves overall park operations and visitor services

The General Plan provides guidance to park managers and other agencies to coordinate their efforts to optimize operations efficiency, security, emergency access, and visitor enjoyment of OSSHP. It also includes many proposals for additional services and opportunities to interpret the local and regional history and stresses cooperative relationships with key planning partners such as the City of Sacramento, Historic Old Sacramento Foundation, Old Sacramento Business Association, and California State Railroad Museum Foundation.

3. Improves public access to the Sacramento River and Riverfront Zone

Implementation of the General Plan would include improvements to the waterfront along the Sacramento River in the Riverfront Zone, located between the I Street Bridge to the north and J Street to the south. This area represents one of the earliest sites in the city and acknowledges the important relationship of the Sacramento River to the development of Sacramento. Interpretive features in this area include the river shoreline, Riverfront Park, an embarcadero/promenade, and sunken historic ships. Proposed uses for the Riverfront Zone include docks and open space that provide multi-purpose event, interpretation, and recreation space, with access to and views of the Sacramento River. Proposed improvements include development of a new dock for the display of historic ships, operation of a water taxi, and boat moorage and enhancements to the appearance and comfort of the riverfront, including landscape enhancements along Riverfront Park; improved views to the river from bike paths, carefully placed seating areas, the excursion train, and new riverfront docks; visitor amenities such as, additional seating, signage, and shade trees; pedestrian and bicycle surface crossing improvements that improve public safety and ADA accessibility; and coordination of interpretive exhibits of the river, as part of the community's vision for a future interpretive trail system along the Sacramento River Parkway. This trail would guide visitors to other resources in the area and encourage opportunities for an interconnected experience with nearby destinations, including the Crocker Art Museum; the Railyards; Discovery Park; Raley Field; and the future Powerhouse Science Center and California Indian Heritage Center.

4. Improves interpretive opportunities in the Gold Rush and Commerce Zone

The Gold Rush and Commerce Zone encompasses the first lots in Sacramento and represents the early years of commerce and communication in Old Sacramento. This area will be the most intensely developed area of OSSHP and will provide visitors with the opportunity to discover and experience Gold Rush history; the raising of the city streets; early commercial-era development, consistent with the historic site significance of the lots on the half block; and the Pony Express, telegraph, and stage lines that improved connectivity throughout the nation. The Gold Rush and Commerce Zone consists of the existing B. F. Hastings Building and Pony Express Plaza at 2nd and J Streets; the 1849 Scene on Front Street; and the Big Four Complex on I Street. Improvements to existing facilities include renovations to the second floor of the B.F. Hastings Building to interpret the first Supreme Court chambers location; interpretation of the Pony Express route through Old Sacramento and visitor enhancements to Pony Express plaza, including seating areas, picnic tables, and drinking fountains; development of a period-style concession space such as, a coffee shop on the first floor of the Dingley Spice Mill; and repurposing uses in the Big Four Building as a transition zone between the Sacramento History Museum and Railroad History Museum to interpret commerce and railroad themes and the use and significance of the Big Four Building through time. In addition to improvements to existing facilities, the General Plan envisions the re-creation of the 1849 Scene as a reconstructed commercial-era block, to be known as the Gold Rush and Commerce block, with three levels: a Gold Rush history and archaeology underground level, with opportunities to display the archaeology and artifacts found on-site and expand the facilities visited on the existing Old Sacramento Underground Tours that interpret the city's original street elevation and street raising; commercial reconstructions of historic sites at current street level; and commercial, office, and hotel functions on the floors above. Visitors to this area will have the opportunity to experience the commercial history and associated architecture and activities of early Sacramento and the region through museum or exhibit spaces, historical vignettes, artifacts, archaeological displays, environmental study programs, tours, living history events, and appropriate period-style concessions. Additionally, historic methods of transportation in use in Sacramento in the 19th century will be displayed through the operation of a period-style horse-drawn streetcar demonstration ride in the Gold Rush and Commerce Zone, recreating the experience of this early form of public transit that preceded the invention of the street and cable cars.

5. Improves facilities in the Railroad History Zone

The General Plan includes opportunities for updated facilities and improved visitor experiences in the Railroad History Zone. This zone tells the story of the railroad—its history, innovation, role in transforming the region and the West, and as an important link between the Pacific Coast and the Atlantic Coast. This area includes artifacts, interpretive collections, and railroad equipment and facilities, including the CPRR Freight Depot and Passenger Station, the RHM, and turntable. Improvements to the Railroad History Zone include improvements to the RHM with the addition of a school/tour group entrance to the east side of the museum; relocation of the excursion train terminus to the Passenger Station to include an expanded boarding area, restaurant concession, and restrooms; and restoration of the Freight Depot to its historic, open 1873 appearance, with opportunities for interpretive exhibits on the agricultural freight and natural setting and history of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The Railroad History Complex will continue to provide opportunities to explore, experience, and understand Sacramento's railroad history, particularly related to the events and development of the nation's first transcontinental railroad and the development of railroads in the west. Visitors will get a glimpse of the history and evolution of rail transportation technology through railroad equipment, access to restored trains and railroad facilities, living history events, and museum displays showcasing railroad history, themes, and rail-related transportation technology.

6. Adds new visitor experiences in the Railroad Technology and Shops Zone

The General Plan provides for new facilities and visitor experiences not currently available in OSSHP. This Railroad Technology and Shops zone tells the story of the railroad from the perspective of the engineers and artisans that restore and repair the historic locomotives and passenger cars and through interactive exhibits that explain the science, engineering, and innovation in railroad technology. This zone includes artifacts, interpretive collections, and railroad equipment and facilities, including the proposed RTM (Boiler Shop, Erecting Shop, turntable, transfer table, and firing line) on the Railyards property. Improvements to the Railroad Technology and Shops Zone include the development of a new RTM at the historic Railyards site to expand the exhibit space and railroad themes of the RHM. The Railroad Technology Zone will add a focus on science and engineering themes. Visitors will gain an understanding and appreciation of rail transportation technology through railroad equipment, outdoor displays of trains, access to restored trains and railroad facilities, living history events, and museum displays showcasing the science and engineering behind innovations in railroad and rail-related transportation technology.

7. Expands opportunities in the Excursion Railroad Zone

The OSSHP General Plan includes opportunities for additional visitor experience and interpretation in the Excursion Railroad Zone. This zone includes over 12-miles of railroad right-of-way; trains, railcars, tracks, other railroad equipment; and existing and future stops or station facilities, associated with the excursion train operations. While current excursion train operations travel from Old Sacramento to Baths along the Sacramento River, excursion train service is proposed to be expanded to include two route segments. Train Line #1 would utilize the existing route, beginning in Old Sacramento (with passenger boarding and ticket offices moved to the Passenger Station) and shall be extended to the Sacramento Zoo, with proposed stops at the Crocker Art Museum, Miller Park, and Baths (the current turnaround location). Train Line #2 would run between a new station (exact location to be determined), originating in the Pocket/Meadowview neighborhood, to the town of Hood. No facilities or train operations are proposed for the 4 miles of rail right-of-way owned by the Sacramento Regional Transit District.

FINDING

California State Parks finds that the proposals contained in the General Plan, including the preservation of cultural resources, accessibility improvements, cooperative opportunities with important planning partners, and new development for park operations and visitor services in various proposed zones, along with a commitment to carefully consider measures to reduce noise of excursion trains to adjacent neighborhoods during future planning efforts, outweighs the potential adverse environmental effects of noise and incompatible land use.