

SACRAMENTO-PLACERVILLE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Member Agencies: City of Folsom / County of El Dorado / County of Sacramento / Regional Transit

July 8, 2010

Jeff Sellwood
President of the Board
Friends of El Dorado Trail

RE: Rail Corridor Uses

At the May 20, 2010 JPA Board Meeting, the Friends of El Dorado Trail (Friends) made a presentation to the Board and Staff regarding the ability to use the JPA corridor for multiple concurrent purposes, such as excursion rail, hiking and bike trails, and other transportation uses. As President of the Board of the Friends, you indicated that the Friends' goal is to promote interests for all users to share use of the corridor. In your presentation, you posed three questions to the JPA on behalf of the Friends. The following are the questions and the JPA's response:

1. *Does the JPA believe that the future of the railbanked corridor is open for all potential future uses? If so, is the development of natural trails and a class 1 bike path considered by the JPA to be viable potential future uses of the corridor. If not, what is the accepted JPA future use of the corridor?*

JPA Response. The JPA was formed for the purpose of acquiring the Placerville Branch railroad corridor from Southern Pacific Railroad, and providing reciprocal use agreements for "transportation and transportation preservation uses" of the corridor as may be desired by the member agencies (Regional Transit, City of Folsom and Counties of Sacramento and El Dorado). Each member agency has the right to use its allocated portion for transportation purposes, subject to the following:

- Not using the corridor in a manner to cause reversionary rights to vest
- Not threatening the continuity of any portion of the corridor
- Not violating the terms of Notice to Interim Trails Use
- Not conflicting with the Reciprocal Use and Funding Agreement (RUFA)

The JPA's primary agreement that governs the member agencies' reciprocal use rights is the RUFA which acknowledges light rail and occasional tourist excursion rail as transportation uses of the corridor. Notwithstanding this, the JPA has encouraged the development of other transportation uses of the corridor. In April and May 2007, public workshops were held in El Dorado County and in Folsom for "the purpose of obtaining community input on the potential improvements to the corridor in Folsom and El Dorado County, including excursion rail service, demonstration rail service, Class I bike trails and natural trails". The outcome of the meetings demonstrated a mutual interest by the public and the JPA in a variety of viable transportation uses for the corridor.

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2. *Is the JPA considering letting a long term lease on the corridor for an excursion train? If so, is the JPA aware that the mere leasing of the corridor for rail use will have a chilling effect on trail development and essentially preclude such development? And, if so aware, is the JPA willing to work with stakeholders to ensure that trail development on the corridor is viable during the time of the lease?*

JPA Response. The above-noted workshops led to the development of the JPA's solicitation for excursion rail services on a defined segment of the corridor. The "Parameters" for developing excursion rail service were presented to and approved by the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors in July 2007, by the Folsom City Council in October 2007, and by the Sacramento County Board in November 2007. The Parameters were developed based on public input received at the workshops and specifically state that "The JPA and its member agencies intend to preserve the excess width of the corridor for other potential uses, including nature trails, bicycle trails and equestrian trails". After a public bidding process using the approved Parameters, the Board authorized staff to enter into negotiations with the Folsom, El Dorado & Sacramento Historical Railroad Association (FEDS) to develop a Lease to operate excursion rail on a portion of the rail corridor.

JPA staff has continued to work with the FEDS in the development of an operating plan for excursion rail services. When the operating plan and related business requirements evolve to the point where excursion rail is viable, staff will ultimately negotiate the terms of the Lease between the FEDS and the JPA. When the Lease is in a form acceptable to the JPA Board, it will be presented to the Boards/Council of El Dorado and Sacramento Counties and the City of Folsom. When the Lease is final, it will require that the excursion rail service be compatible with other transportation uses of the corridor and provide for reasonable safety precautions.

3. *Has the JPA either conducted or considered conducting a feasibility study of the rail corridor to determine if it is physically and fiscally possible or safe to have a train on the rail bed along with a class 1 bike path and natural trails for hiking and equestrian use in the rail corridor? If not, will the JPA consider conducting such a study before letting a lease?*

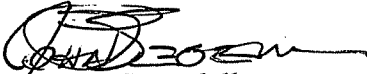
JPA Response. The JPA has not conducted a separate independent feasibility study, per se. The JPA does not have budget for a study and is not my recommendation that we conduct one. The conditions of the corridor were assessed for the current excursion rail project. It is known that the width of the corridor generally measures 66 feet or 100 feet with the track structure (rail, ties and ballast) taking about 20 feet. This gives 23 to 40 feet on each side of the track to develop other uses. In general, the land just inside the fence line is relatively flat and could be graded for trail usage. However, it is also acknowledged that the slopes are more variable away from the track and, in locations where the track subgrade has been cut through a hill, the adjacent topography would be difficult to grade for trails.

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In Summary. The acquisition of the Placerville Branch from the Southern Pacific was the acquisition of a 53-mile Rail Corridor. As noted above, the primary document governing the member agencies' reciprocal use rights, the RUFA, contemplates that the Rail Corridor would be used for rail purposes. Since its purchase in 1996, Regional Transit has extended light rail into downtown Folsom, and Folsom and the Counties of Sacramento and El Dorado are considering the development of excursion rail operations on portions from downtown Folsom to Shingle Springs. The JPA would like to assure the Friends and other potential users that in all its efforts to develop rail uses, the JPA will continue to encourage the development of other concurrent transportation uses of the Rail Corridor. The JPA will not enter into an agreement for excursion rail service that precludes other transportation uses. On the other hand, it is not in the interests of the JPA to enter into an agreement for other transportation uses that would preclude rail operations.

Sincerely,



John C. Segerdell
Chief Executive Officer
SPTC-JPA

Copy: JPA Board Members
JPA Staff