

# FAQ Sheet

## The Del Rio Trail



### 1. What is the Del Rio Trail?

The Del Rio Trail is a City of Sacramento plan for a 4.8-mile long biking and walking trail that would run from roughly the Sacramento Zoo to the Pocket area water tower. It will connect residents to several trail systems without the need to use streets. The trail will be built on an abandoned rail corridor that Regional Transit is transferring to the City in order to build the trail.

### 2. Is the TRAIL project at risk?

It seems like everyone loves the trail! There is a LONG list of supporters, including SLPNA. However, there is a last-minute effort by tourist train supporters to OPPOSE the trail plan. The train buffs want to eventually run tourist trains through the neighborhood and want the City to RE-DESIGN the project to accommodate future train traffic.

### 3. I thought the TOURIST TRAIN plan was defeated in 2014. Why is it coming up again?

The State Parks Department removed the neighborhood section from its tourist train plan back in 2014, after significant community opposition. The State Parks and Recreation Commission officially adopted the plan, which deleted the South Land Park trains from its 20 Year General Plan. Now that numerous agencies have voted to pursue a popular community trail on the abandoned rail corridor, the tourist train supporters are trying to resurrect their defeated plan.

**4. What is wrong with TRAINS running on this corridor?**

These proposed tourist trains are not light rail cars, electric trains, or trolleys. These are heavy, smoke-belching, vintage locomotives. Trains will run within feet of homes, churches, preschools, schools, and parks. **Thick smoke** will be pumped into backyards and into the tree lines. **Controversial herbicides** will be sprayed along the track area throughout the year. Valley oaks, wild grapevines and wild blackberry bushes will be **clearcut** on and near the trackbed. Home **foundations**, patios, and swimming pools may be **damaged due to ground shaking**. Loud horn blasts will echo at every street crossing (**110 decibel blasts**). When trains cross streets, expect **traffic jams** at Sutterville Road, South Land Park Drive, Fruitridge Road, 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Florin Road, and Pocket Road. **Property values will suffer** for a several block radius of the train corridor, impacting hundreds of homeowners. **Bells will sound** at each crossing. **Heavy maintenance equipment** will operate on the track throughout the year, pouring rock ballast, sawing and chipping tree branches, and spraying poisons. **Wheels and brakes will grind** and squeal throughout the neighborhood. **Pedestrian, vehicle, and pet collisions** will occur, as they do on every rail line. Financially, the train plan would likely cost **multiple millions of taxpayer dollars**, whereas the trail option will be far less expensive, and will be largely funded by grants. Due to the height of the locomotives, homeowners will lose their backyard **privacy** along the corridor.

**5. Are the rail tracks part of 1800's Sacramento history, or part of the historic transcontinental railroad?**

NO. Trains shuttled agricultural products on this short spur in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (from 1907 to the 1970s). The corridor was officially abandoned in 1978. Regional Transit (RT) bought the tracks in the 1980s, as a possible light rail line. The tracks languished and sat as surplus property (costing RT \$1 million to maintain over the past 30 years). RT is transferring the land to the City to build the community trail.

The rail line is considered historic due to its association with Delta agriculture, but that has no bearing on the tracks use in the future. To recognize the previous use of the corridor, the City is retaining 98.2% of the tracks. The City also intends to incorporate a historical rail-theme to honor its 20<sup>th</sup> Century use.

**6. Will the rail tracks be removed or retained?**

The City's trail plan currently **RETAINS** 98.2% of the rail tracks. A few sections of track need to be removed for safety or accessibility reasons.

**7. Are there any concerns about the trail?**

The City has held many community meetings and listened to schools, businesses, and homeowners. As a result, there were relatively few concerns, but a few were expressed in the planning phase, and addressed by the planners. (Crime: the trail planners worked closely with the Police Department and the trail will incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. Security experts note that “more eyes” on the land decreases crime on the corridor. Privacy: compared to huge trains rolling past backyards, having joggers and cyclists pass-by is preferable to trains. Homelessness: this is already an issue on the corridor, so “more eyes” on the trail and easier access by Police should reduce the problem.

**8. What are the benefits of the Del Rio Trail?**

There are many benefits. (1) creation of an easy and safe walking/biking path to get around the neighborhood; (2) safe routes to school; (3) creation of a nature walking area right here!; (4) two proposed community gardens along the trail (near commercial areas); (5) removal of blighted land, homeless camps, and trash on the corridor; (6) increased property values; (7) exercise opportunities!; (8) no locomotives rumbling through the neighborhood; (9) opportunities for school gardens; native plantings, arboretums, adopt-a-trail programs, etc.; (10) walking the dog suddenly got easier; (11) plus: an innovative dog park/café is slated to be built next to the trail!

**9. What is the current status of the trail project?**

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments already awarded the city \$2.2 million to design the trail and take the project through environmental review, and another \$6 million for construction. The City Council and the Regional Transit Board voted unanimously to proceed with the trail in 2017 & 2018. The City and its engineers have met with residents and other stakeholders, held numerous public meetings, and issued the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) so that the project will be “shovel ready” soon. However, tourist train promoters from outside the project area are trying to block the project unless the City redesigns the trail to accommodate tourist trains in the future.

**10. What is SLPNA’s position on the trail project?**

SLPNA (and FIVE other neighborhood associations) strongly supports the Del Rio Trail, and we oppose attempts to add trains to the trail. The community trail will connect thousands of residents to parks, businesses, homes, and schools. Parts of South Land Park have no sidewalks, and some streets are dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. The Del Rio Trail project is a rare opportunity to add 4.5 miles of a protected biking and walking trail in an established community. SLPNA strongly opposes attempts by outside interests to run expensive and environmentally toxic locomotives through the heart of our community.

**11. Why do train buffs want to run trains along the community walking trail?**

If you are told it is about rail “preservation,” do not be fooled. 98.2% of the tracks are being retained. Train buffs want access to the community trail land so they can run a **state-owned dinner train**. Although the State Parks system has \$1.2 billion in deferred maintenance, and the CA State Railroad Museum needs to raise \$90 million to fund a technology museum in the railyards, they have chosen to try to block the City’s community trail so they can one day run a tourist attraction in the heart of a quiet neighborhood.

**12. What is the primary opposition to the trail?**

Outside interests want to run a state government tourist train on the trail land that the City possesses. At first, the train buffs claimed that retaining the rails was about historic preservation. The City compromised and retained 98.2% of the tracks! Now, the tourist train interests are switching their position, saying they want the community trail RE-DESIGNED so government tourist trains can run on the tracks one day.

**13. How can I SUPPORT the community trail? :**

**(1) Email YOUR COMMENTS to the City**

Email: [jschenirer@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:jschenirer@cityofsacramento.org) and Tom Buford, Environmental Planning Services at [tbuford@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:tbuford@cityofsacramento.org) ) saying that you **support the City’s current trail plan** and that you are **opposed to re-designing the trail project** to accommodate future train traffic! Include your name and address.

**(2) Sign up for trail alerts!** Email [trail@slpna.org](mailto:trail@slpna.org) to get on the trail mailing list!

