



California High-Speed Rail **BRIEFING: October 15, 2020 Board Meeting Agenda Item #3**

TO: Chairman Richards and Board Members
FROM: Margaret Cederoth, Director of Planning and Sustainability
DATE: October 15, 2020
RE: 2020 Sustainability Report

Summary

Informational item.

Background

HSR POLI-PLAN-03, adopted by the Board in April 2019, states that the Authority will produce a sustainability report every year that conforms with global best practice.

The Authority developed an annual report compliant with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G4 standards, a reporting protocol used by several peer rail organizations. Through this annual report, the Authority honors its commitment to transparency, providing stakeholders with quantitative and qualitative data on progress against key commitments and other topics identified as highly significant in disclosing the sustainability of the system.

The 2020 Sustainability Report is the fifth published report, covering calendar year 2019, with some data points updated to reflect progress to date. The Authority published its first report, covering calendar year 2015, in December 2016.

Prior Board Action

The Board passed Resolution #HSRA 19-02 in April 2019, approving an updated sustainability policy.

Resolution #HSRA 19-02 directed staff to:

1. Revise specifications and contract provisions to continue to advance the achievement of carbon neutral construction and other sustainability goals and stated Board objectives;
2. Use materials data and construction data to inform the scoring of construction bids to demonstrate compliance with the Authority's sustainability policy;
3. Carry out information sessions with industry providers and contractors;
4. Carry out partnering sessions with station communities;
5. Continue identification of climate vulnerability and asset risk, and implement climate adaptation measures; and,
6. Report to the Board and public on the overall impacts of implementing sustainable infrastructure principles in the high-speed rail program, and how such a program furthers the state's low carbon, natural resources and community benefit goals.

Discussion

The Policy states: “The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) will deliver a sustainable high-speed rail system for California that serves as a model for sustainable rail infrastructure. The Authority has developed and will continue to implement Sustainability practices that inform and affect the planning, siting, designing, construction, mitigation, operation, and maintenance of the high-speed rail system.”

Annual reporting offers a periodic snapshot of the effectiveness of the Authority’s implementation actions across the program. The report provides consistent measurement of indicators that provide the delivery team with reliable data to inform the refinement of contract requirements, policy, and organization activities. The report also illustrates where corrective action is necessary to achieve success.

Specific progress in 2019 included:

- Being awarded 5 stars and being named, for the fourth year in a row, as a top sustainable rail infrastructure project by theGRESB Infrastructure Assessment, which benchmarks our environmental, social and governance policies, practices and performance.
- Increasing the total area of habitat preserved and restored by more than 35 percent, with more than 3,000 acres of natural habitat.
- Securing 1,250 acres of agriculture preservation easements, which results in more than 36,000 metric tons of avoided carbon dioxide emissions.
- Partnering with Tree Fresno to plant 2,400 trees in schools and parks in the Fresno area, and the California Urban Forest Coalition to plant thousands more trees in priority communities along the alignment.
- Avoiding more than 140,000 pounds of criteria air pollutants cumulatively since the start of construction.
- Dispatching 4,200 workers across 32 construction sites; more than 40 percent of these workers live in disadvantaged communities, keeping jobs, employment and economic activity in these vulnerable communities.
- Generating economic opportunity for hundreds of businesses, including 560 small and disadvantaged businesses, of which 180 are Disabled Business Enterprises and 60 are Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises.
- Advancing station site project development work to identify opportunities in the Authority station sites for facilities and development that enhances system ridership.
- Deploying EMMA 2.0, an update to program data collection, incorporating feedback from field use and facilitating cyclical reporting that further improves the timeliness, accuracy, validity and efficiency of our reporting.
- Initiating third-party verification of our sustainability achievements.

As identified previously, we continue to move forward with key activities, continuing implementation work in the following areas:

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: Continuing to monitor and account for the GHG emissions produced, sequestered and avoided in project delivery; Applying the insights from the whole life carbon models for the project and refining a baseline of materials and construction emissions with information from the 2020 Business Plan and Program Baseline.

Verification: Finalizing documentation with the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure to verify and validate the program’s sustainability claims.

Station Communities: Finalizing station concept plan documents that illustrate a building block approach to the stations, prioritizing universal accessibility, sustainable design, pedestrian access and community connections.

Renewable Energy: Refining the study of Authority parcels for renewable energy generation and developing a final approach to energy storage and renewable energy.

Climate Change: Publishing a Climate Adaptation Implementation Plan aligned with state resilience and adaptation guidance.

Organization: Refining the Sustainability Implementation Plan to make necessary updates to targets, definitions of program sustainability elements, milestones and measures for success.

Reporting: Providing continued transparency through monthly reporting and the EMMA dashboard.

Procurement: Continuing the Authority's demonstrated leadership in sustainable procurement with an internal, multidisciplinary working team which has been implementing sustainable procurement strategies.

Engagement: Reaching out and listening to external stakeholders to identify social, environmental and economic shocks and stressors that could diminish the resiliency of the system; collaborating with peers on best sustainability practice for transit and rail systems; and using our partners (Rail Delivery and Early Train Operator) to leverage worldwide best practices in sustainability, climate adaptation and resiliency.

The actions of every member of the Authority and its delivery partners contribute to the positive outcomes and progress detailed in this Sustainability Report.

Legal Approval

This is an informational item on the Authority's 2020 Sustainability Report, and by itself, does not have a Legal impact on the program.

Budget and Fiscal Impact

This is an informational item on the Authority's 2020 Sustainability Report, and by itself, does not have a budget or fiscal impact.

REVIEWER INFORMATION	SIGNATURE
Reviewer Name and Title: Brian Annis Chief Financial Officer	Signature verifying budget analysis: Original Signed October 7, 2020
Reviewer Name and Title: Alicia Fowler Chief Legal Counsel	Signature verifying legal analysis: Original Signed October 7, 2020

Recommendations

This is an informational item.

Attachments

2020 Sustainability Report