

# Community Impact Evaluation

## Description of Existing Facility

West Lane is a four lane north-south urban arterial in the City of Stockton (City). West Lane intersects the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Fresno Subdivision at a 70-degree skew. The crossing is approximately 1,000 feet south of the signalized intersection of West Lane and Alpine Avenue. There is also a tee intersection with El Pinal Drive approximately 1,000 feet south of the railroad crossing.

The crossing is adjacent to land currently zoned for residential and industrial/commercial uses. The City has updated its General Plan to a time horizon of 2040. The City's transportation plans for West Lane continue to operate as a four-lane roadway. The limits of the railroad grade separation would be the intersection of West Lane and Alpine Avenue to the north and the intersection of West Lane and El Pinal Drive to the south.

The northwest quadrant of the crossing is currently undeveloped land owned by the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRRC). The northeast and south quadrants contain mostly commercial businesses with some undeveloped land east of the railroad tracks.

## Project Benefits

### Reduced Blocking Delay

Traffic data from the City currently estimates that West Lane in the vicinity of the UPRR crossing experiences approximately 22,019 vehicle trips per day and is projected to increase as industrial development continues in the crossing vicinity. The posted speed limit on West Lane at the existing crossing is 40 miles per hour. According to data provided by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and UPRR, there is an average of 29 freight trains and 4 passenger trains passing through this location every day. The trains travel at an average speed of 50 miles per hour at this crossing.

The "blocking/delay time" associated with those trains equates to approximately 99 total minutes of vehicle delay each day. Adjacent commercial and residential developments will continue to add a significant amount of traffic to West Lane. As traffic and the frequency of train travel (both passenger and freight) increases, congestion at this railroad crossing will worsen, resulting in a greater potential for accidents.

### Enhanced Safety

Safety is of paramount concern at the grade crossing. Four accidents have been recorded at this at-grade crossing by the FRA, including one fatality. The one fatality involved a pedestrian crossing at night and there are no streetlights at the crossing. Enhancing safety at the crossing is critical due to the high volumes of vehicles and school bus trips (22,019 ADT) using the crossing. The new grade separation will enhance safety by separating vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists from trains, eliminating the accident potential at the location.

### Air Quality and Noise Pollution

The existing crossing contributes to poor air quality and local noise pollution. The San Joaquin Valley Air Basin is a federal air quality non-attainment zone for ozone and particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) and has a maintenance plan for PM10. Vehicles waiting at the at-grade crossing on West Lane when the gates are closed produce high levels of air pollution and greenhouse gases, including PM2.5, PM10, ozone, NOX, ROG, and CO. As vehicle traffic grows, the delays will increase beyond the current 99 minutes. This will intensify vehicle emissions and poor air quality. The grade separation will eliminate delays, idling vehicles,

annual vehicle emissions. As traffic continues to grow, the total emission reductions will continue to increase and further impact air quality in the City and San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. The project is an important part of the region's air quality improvement strategies.

Trains passing through the closed crossing must use their horns and whistles to notify commuters and pedestrians of their presence. There are approximately 30,844 individuals living within 1.25 miles of the crossing. The elimination of the at-grade crossing also reduces noise by no longer needing the train horns to indicate the train is at the crossing.

### Emergency Access

West Lane is a major four-lane arterial in the middle of the City. The City relies on this corridor to provide emergency services to the central Stockton area both north and south of UPRR's tracks. In-route delays are anticipated for emergency vehicles if an at-grade crossing is to remain instead of a grade separated crossing at the West Lane/UPRR location. These delays will impact the City's Fire Department goals of responding to an emergency within four minutes, 90% of the time.

This crossing is also approximately a ½ mile northeast of St. Joseph's Medical Center. Emergency vehicles serving the medical center as well as police and fire vehicles rely on access through the West Lane and UPRR crossing to ensure the safety of Stockton citizens. When the crossing is closed, emergency vehicles traveling to the hospital must detour around the crossing, adding five minutes to the trip. In route delays for emergency vehicles are vital concerns for the City and a reason this project is needed.

An at-grade crossing has the potential to generate more than an hour in crossing delays every day and is a major consideration which justifies the grade separation. Furthermore, due to the limited number of grade separated crossings at UPRR's main line in the central Stockton area, funding this project is vital to provide orderly traffic flow and assure effective emergency vehicle access.

### Enhanced Commuter Rail Service

The San Joaquin Amtrak commuter rail services has two round trip service (4 trains) per day that travel through the crossing connecting Stockton to Sacramento. The multiple at-grade crossings along the route, include West Lane, present risks to transit reliability. Trains can be delayed at West Lane due to the tracks being obstructed. Grade separating West Lane removes the conflict between commuter trains and vehicles and pedestrians. This improves transit reliability and promotes a mode shift for commuters.

### Multimodal Travel

The City's Bicycle Master Plan, which was adopted in 2017, calls for West Lane to have Class IV protected bikeway. Currently there are no sidewalks or bike lanes present on West Lane at this crossing which makes it very unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists. The proposed crossing at West Lane would require 8-foot sidewalks for pedestrians and Class IV bikeways for bicyclists. If the grade separation is constructed, it would help to achieve the City's transportation planning goals, as well as provide safer pedestrian and bicycle access in the area of the railroad crossing.

### Transportation Equity Investment

The West Lane crossing with UPRR is located within census tract 6077001500. This census tract is identified as a Senate Bill 535 disadvantaged community with a percentile of 90 in CalEnviroScreen 4.0. The census tract is also identified as an Assembly Bill 1550 low-income community, with a per capita income of \$16,500. This is significantly lower than the statewide per capita income average of \$41,276 (US Census 2021).

The grade separation provides the opportunity for transportation investment in central Stockton. The project will help to improve mobility by providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The project will also improve air quality and public health for residents in the census tract.

### Multiple Funding Sources

Other funding sources have been identified as potentially contributing to funding for this project, such as San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) Measure K funds and SJCOG's Regional Transportation Improvement Fee. The combined funding from several sources will help the City construct the project by reducing the burden on capital improvement program funding.