

North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan

Project Development Team Meeting #4

Tuesday, August 22, 2023



NORTH VALLEY RAIL
CHICO • GRIDLEY • MARYSVILLE/YUBA CITY
PLUMAS LAKE • SACRAMENTO

Agenda

- 1) Opening Remarks
- 2) Project Update and Schedule (*Chris Devine, BCAG*)
- 3) Review Community Questionnaire – Results (*Gladys Cornell, AIM Consulting*)
- 4) Platform Length Changes / Other Design Updates (*Daniel Hartman, AECOM*)
- 5) Ridership Analysis Results (*Daniel Krause, AECOM*)
- 6) Fare Structure and Pricing Strategy (*Daniel Krause, AECOM*)
- 7) Cost Estimates Update (*Daniel Hartman, AECOM*)
- 8) Funding and Financing Strategy (*Daniel Krause, AECOM*)
- 9) Station Visual Simulations (*Daniel Hartman, AECOM*)
- 10) Sacramento Valley Station Access Analysis Update (*Chris Devine, BCAG*)
- 11) Next Steps/Next Meeting (*Chris Devine, BCAG*)

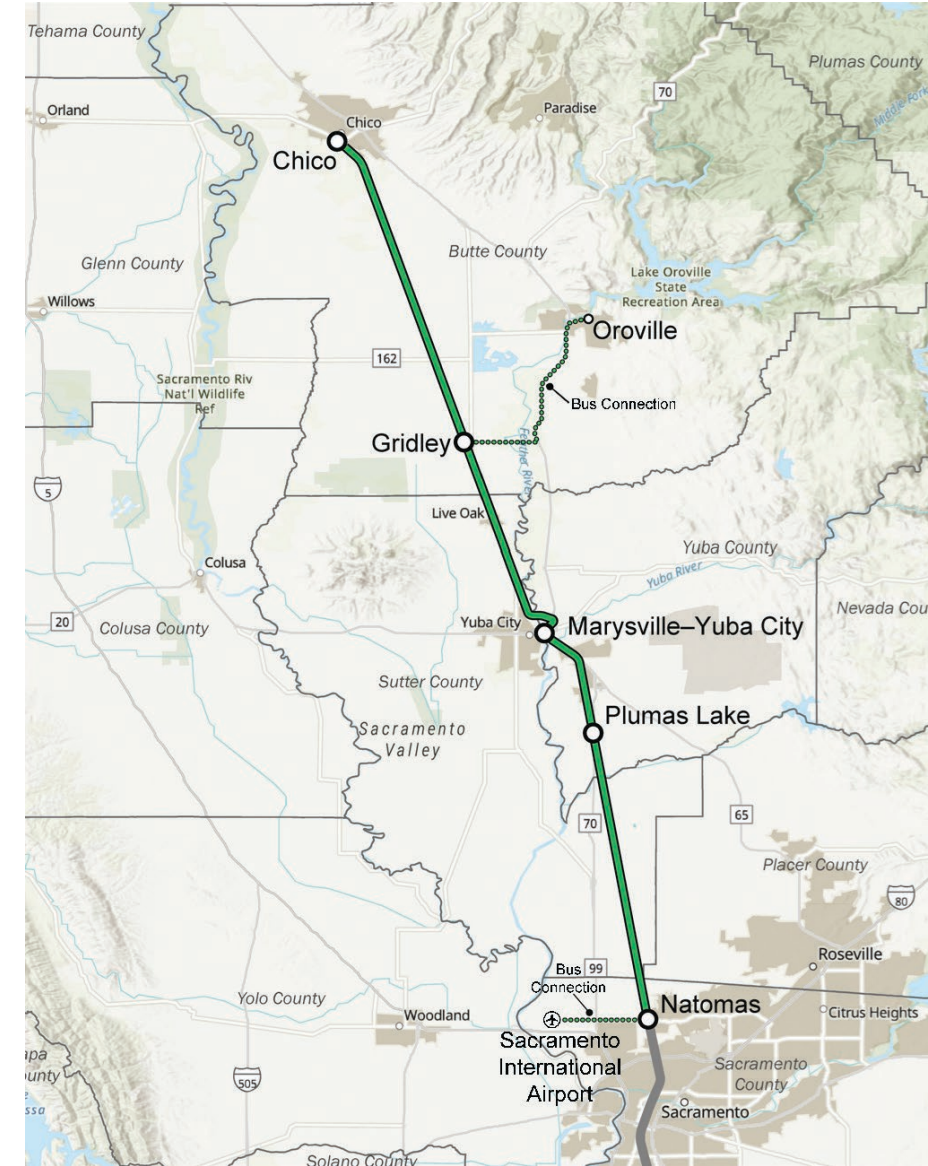
North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan **Project Update and Schedule**

Chris Devine, BCAG

Project Update

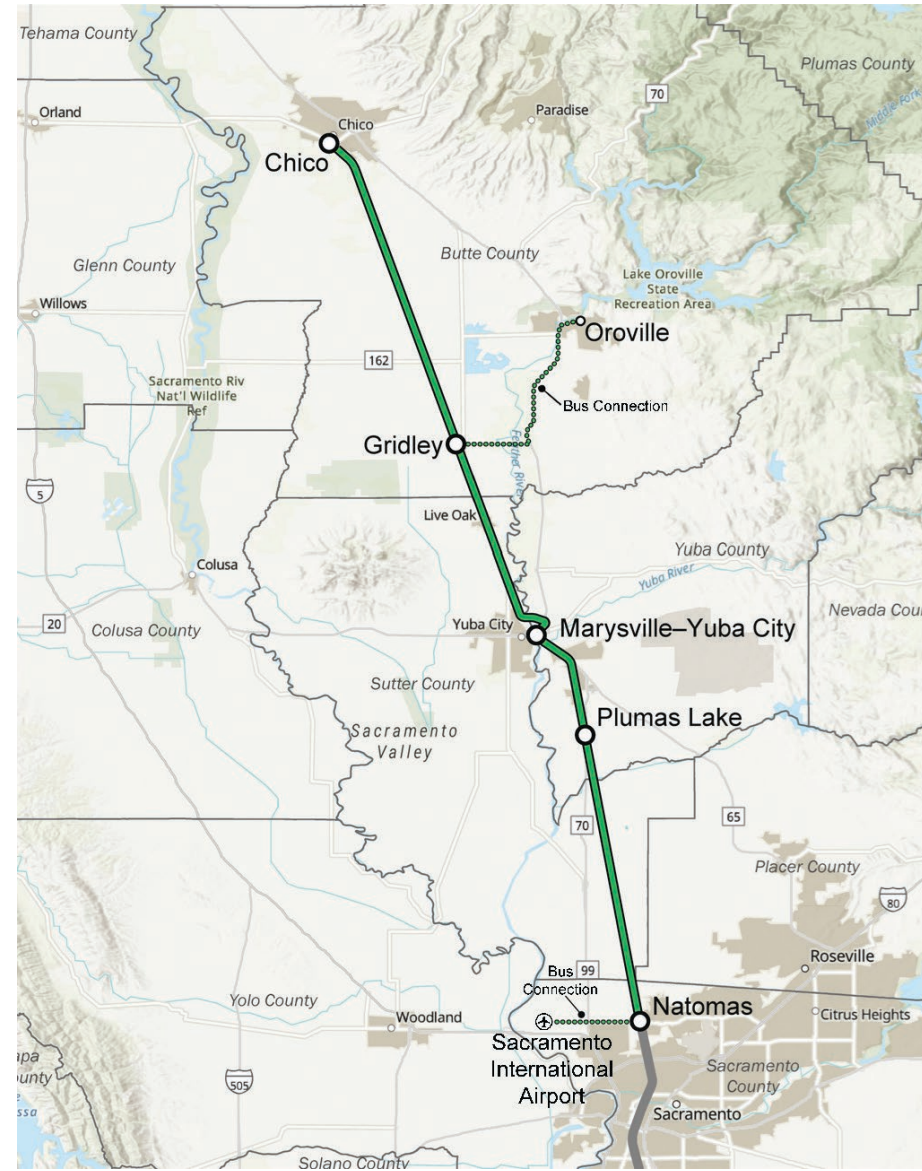
Recent Progress

- Completed refinements to station conceptual designs, visual simulations, and initial capital cost estimates
- Began work on O&M cost estimates
- Completed ridership and revenue forecasts
- Began work on a funding/financing strategy and fare structure and pricing plan
- Completed 8-page project information booklet
- Conducted analysis on access to Sacramento Valley Station
- Continued effort to obtain funding for environmental clearance (BCAG's was not granted a RAISE grant and is now pursuing RTIP and ITIP funds)

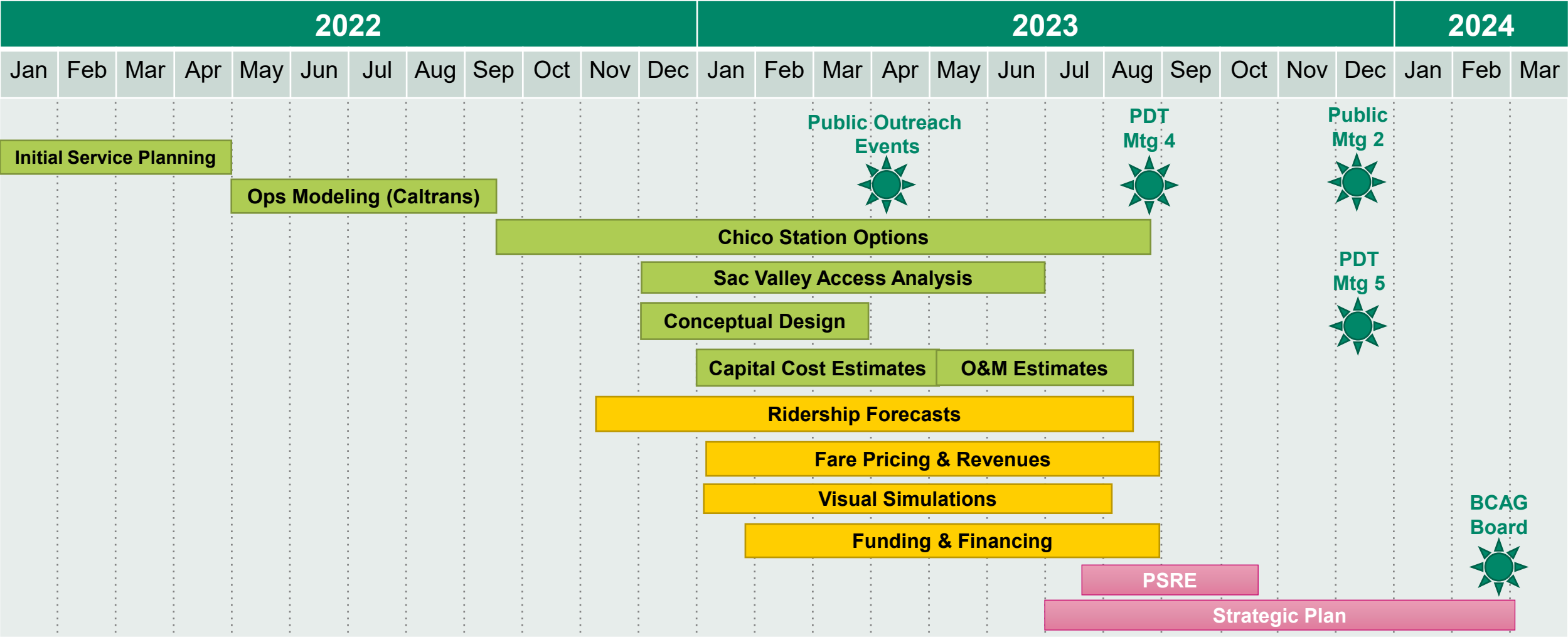


Current and Upcoming Work

- Production of a Project Study Report Equivalent
- Finalization O&M cost estimates, fare policy/pricing plan, and funding/financing strategy
- Production of the Strategic Plan document
- Continued coordination with Caltrans and UP
- Continuation of stakeholder outreach and public engagement effort
- Lock-in funding for environmental clearance/preliminary engineering phase
- Plan for and conduct Public Meeting #2



Strategic Plan Schedule



North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan **Review Community Questionnaire Results / Public Outreach Next Steps**

Gladys Cornell, AIM Consulting

Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

Responses

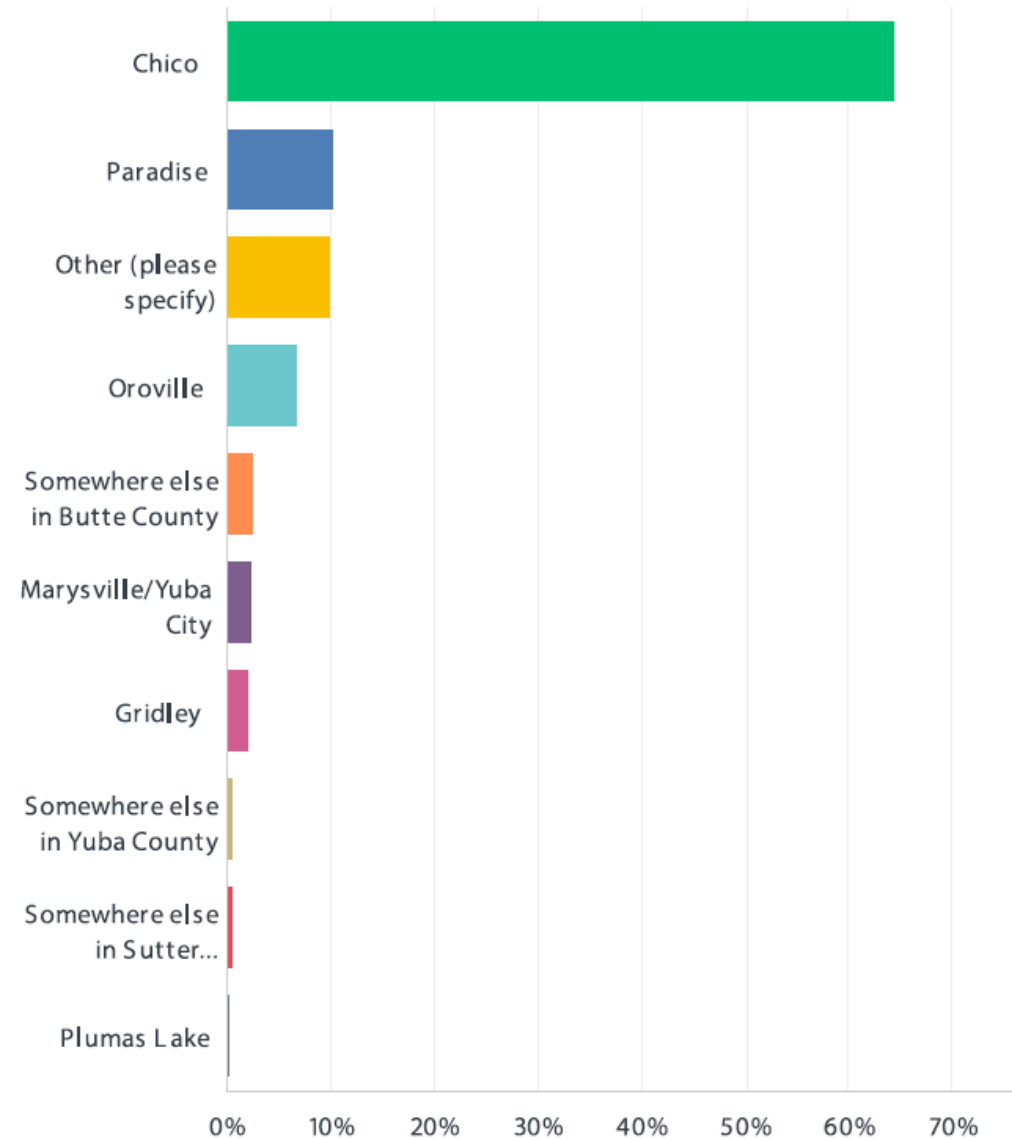
- The questionnaire was online from April 1, 2023 to May 15, 2023
- 506 people submitted responses to the questionnaire
- Respondents included representation from all jurisdictions within the project area
- 95% completion rate

Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

1

QUESTION 1: Where do you live?

HIGHLIGHTS: Chico was the most prominent, with 326 responses. Following was Paradise with 52, Oroville with 34, Somewhere else in Butte County with 13, Marysville/ Yuba City with 12, and Gridley with 11. Others include Sacramento, Palermo, Durham, Single Springs, Magalia, Berry Creek, Sacramento, Feather Falls, Redding, and Ukiah.

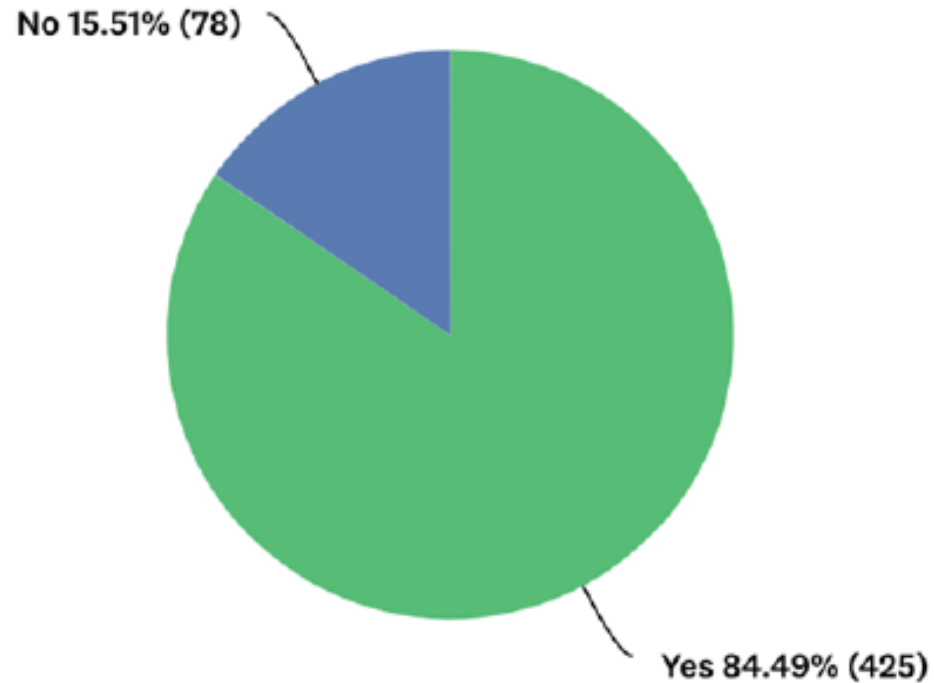


Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

2

QUESTION 2: Have you ridden passenger trains before?

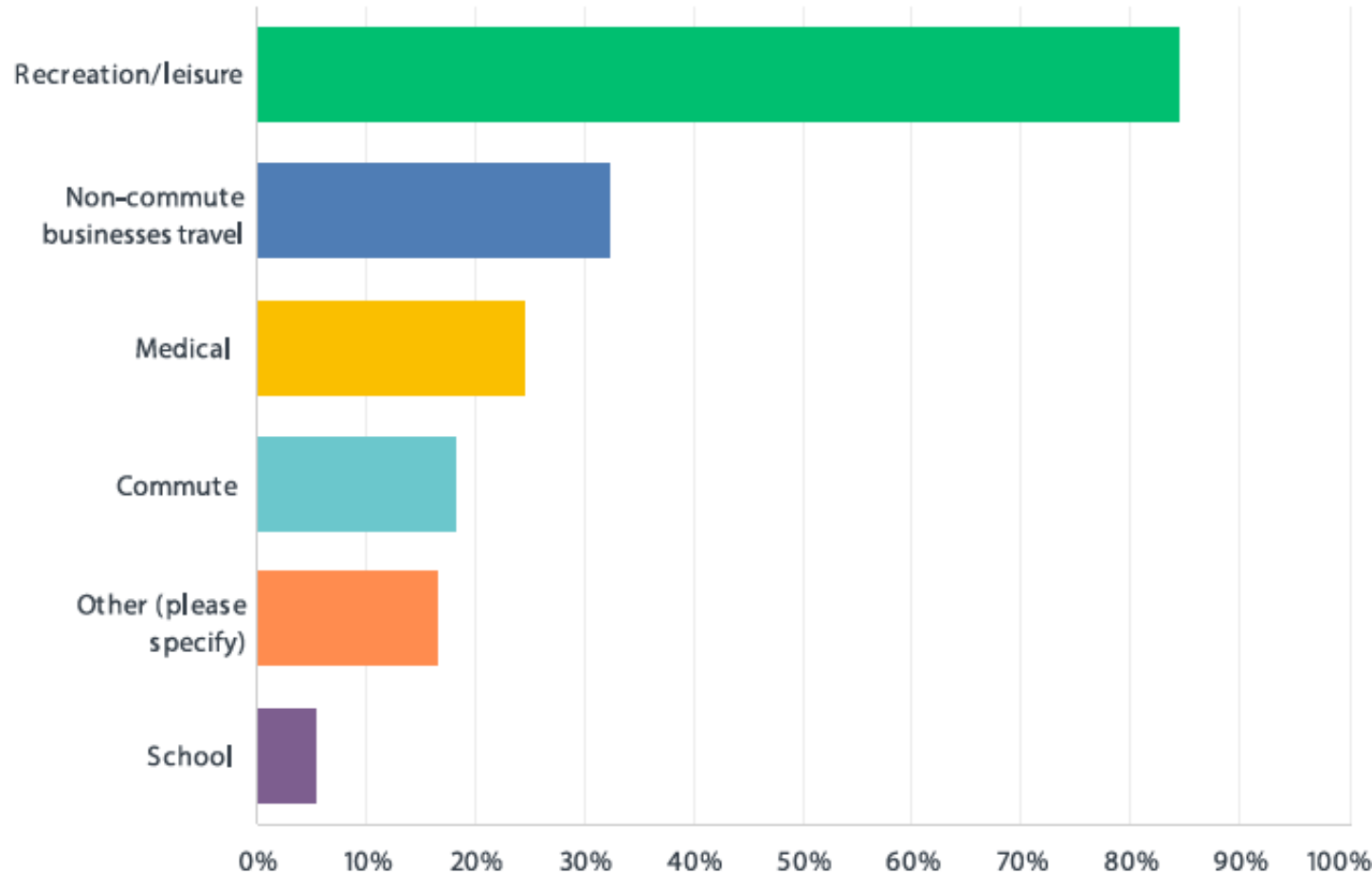
HIGHLIGHTS: Of 506 responses, 425 said they've ridden a passenger train, while 78 said they have not.



Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

3

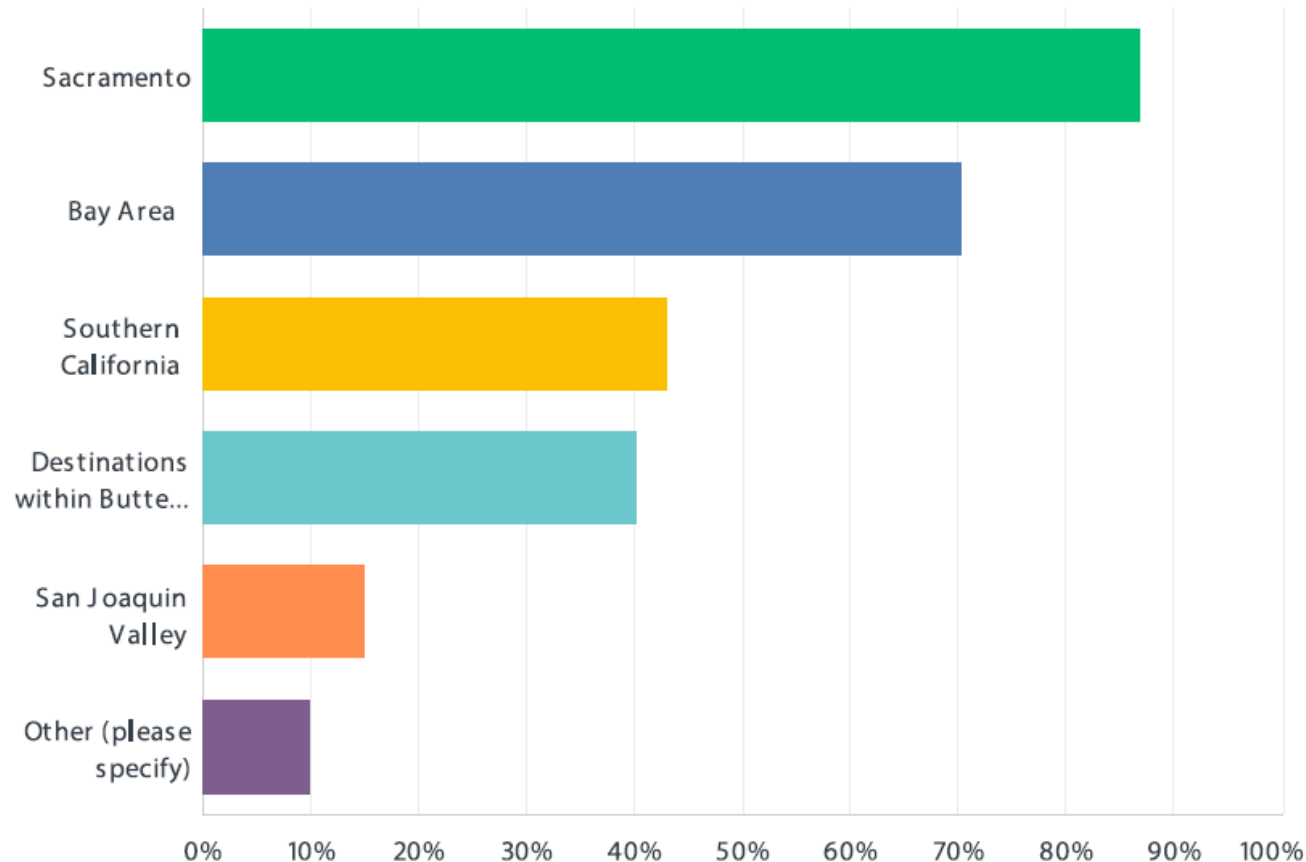
QUESTION 3: What kind of trips do you anticipate taking on the North Valley Passenger Rail?



Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

4

QUESTION 4: Where do you anticipate traveling to when using the North Valley Passenger Rail?

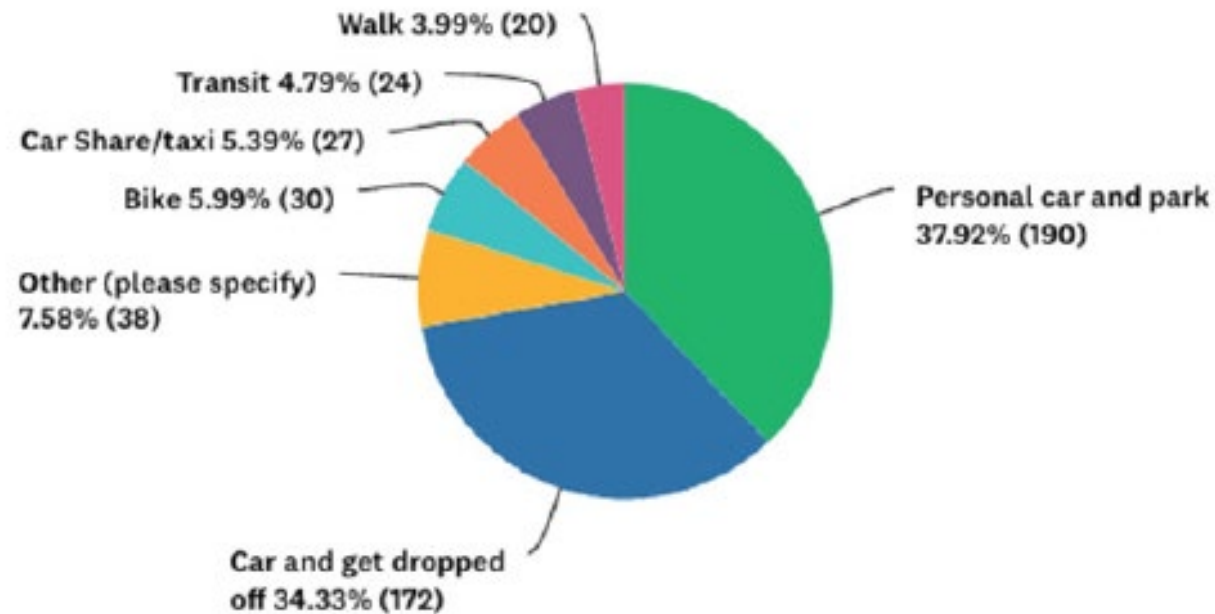


Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

5

QUESTION 5: How do you plan to travel to the stations?

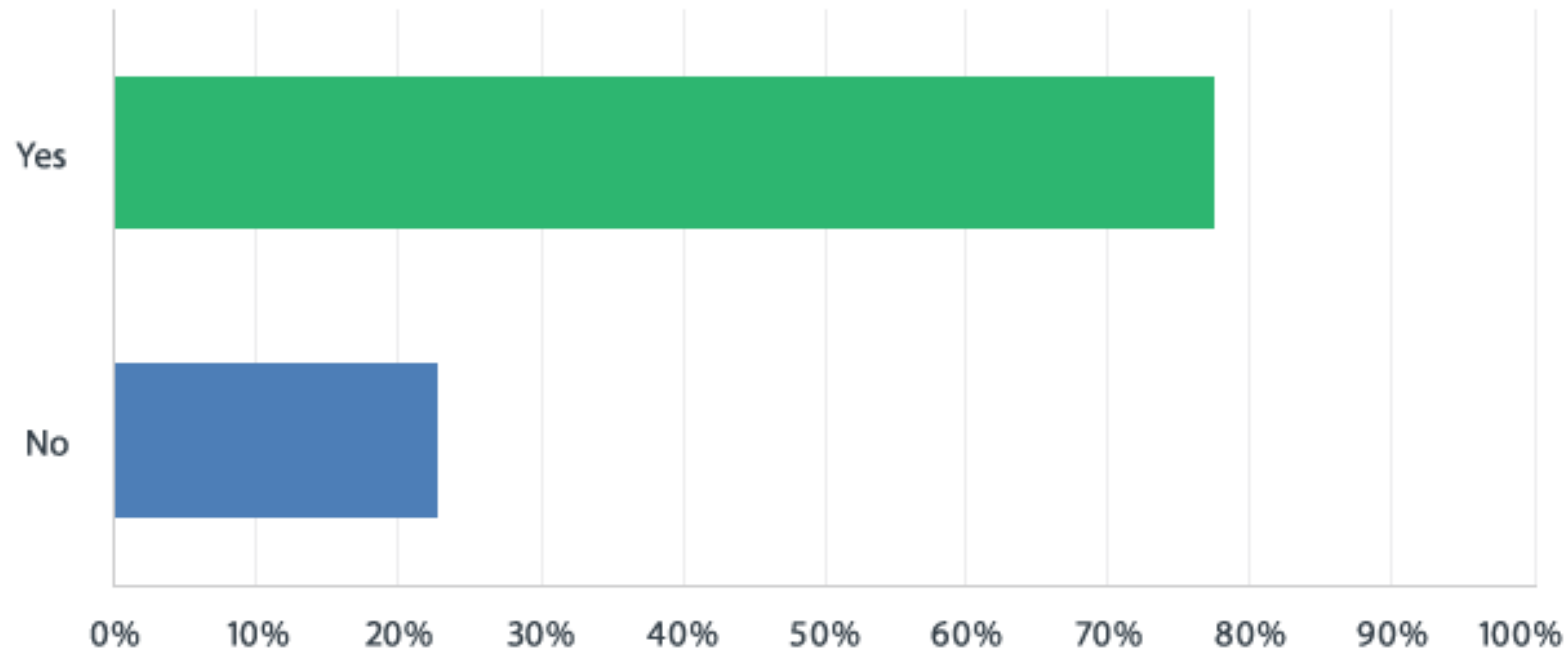
HIGHLIGHTS: Personal car and park was the dominant response, with 190 responses. The Car/dropped off with 172 responses, Bike with 30 responses, Car/share with 27 responses, Transit with 24 responses, and Walk with 20 responses. Other responses included Paratransit, Bus, and Amtrak.



Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

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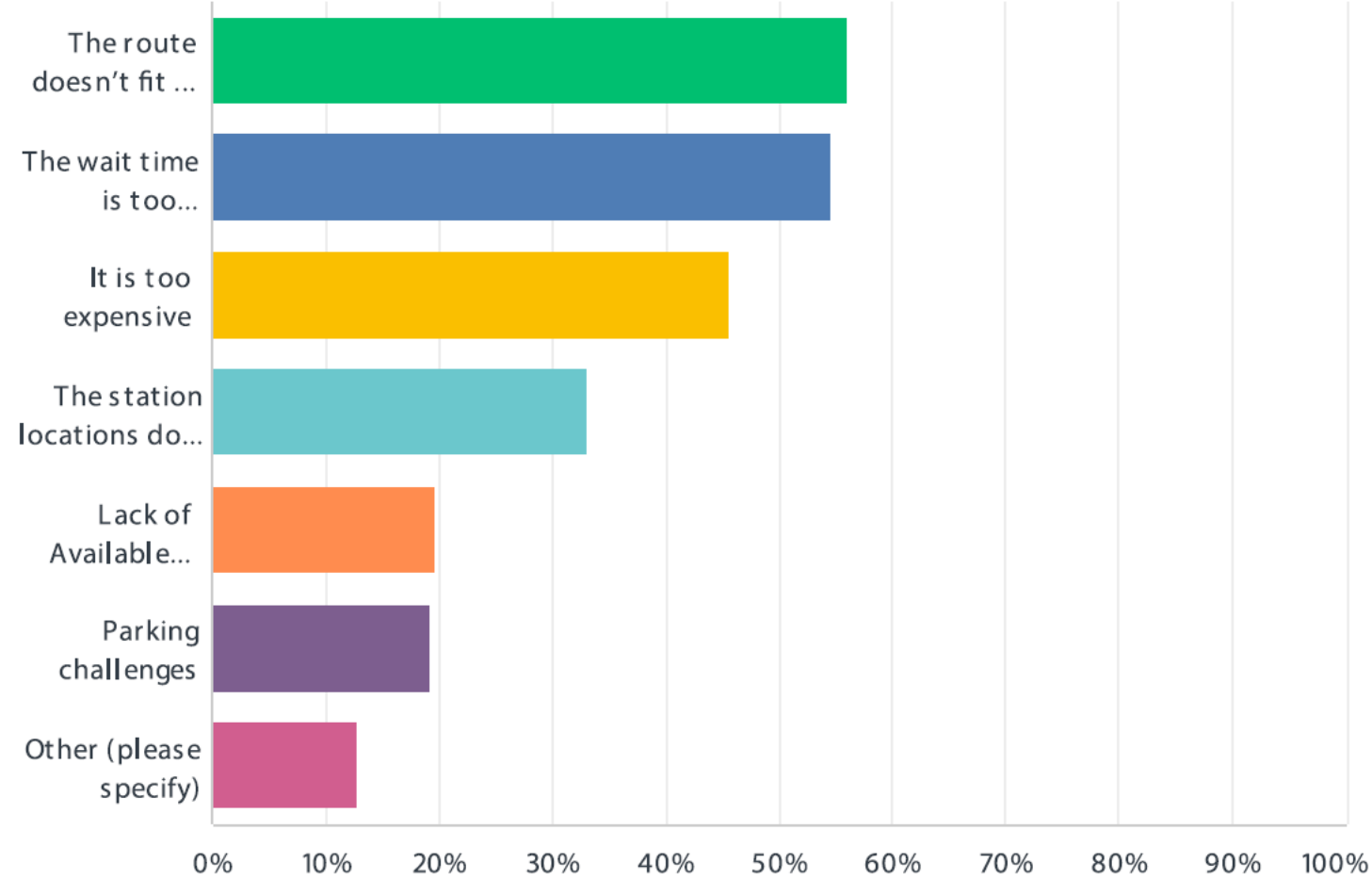
QUESTION 6A: If buses were aligned with train arrivals/departures, would you consider taking transit to the station?



Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

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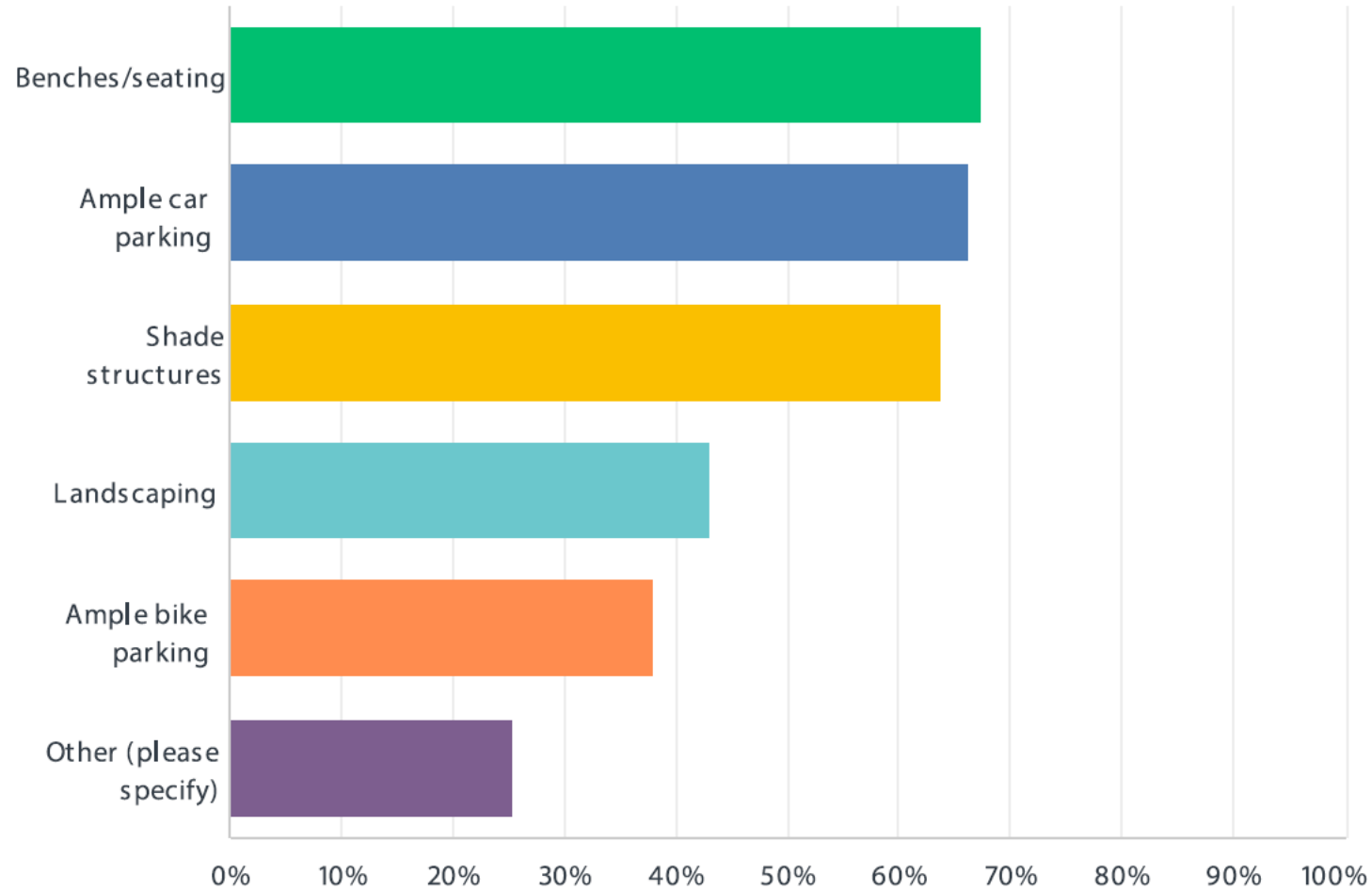
QUESTION 7: What would prevent you from using North Valley Rail service?



Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

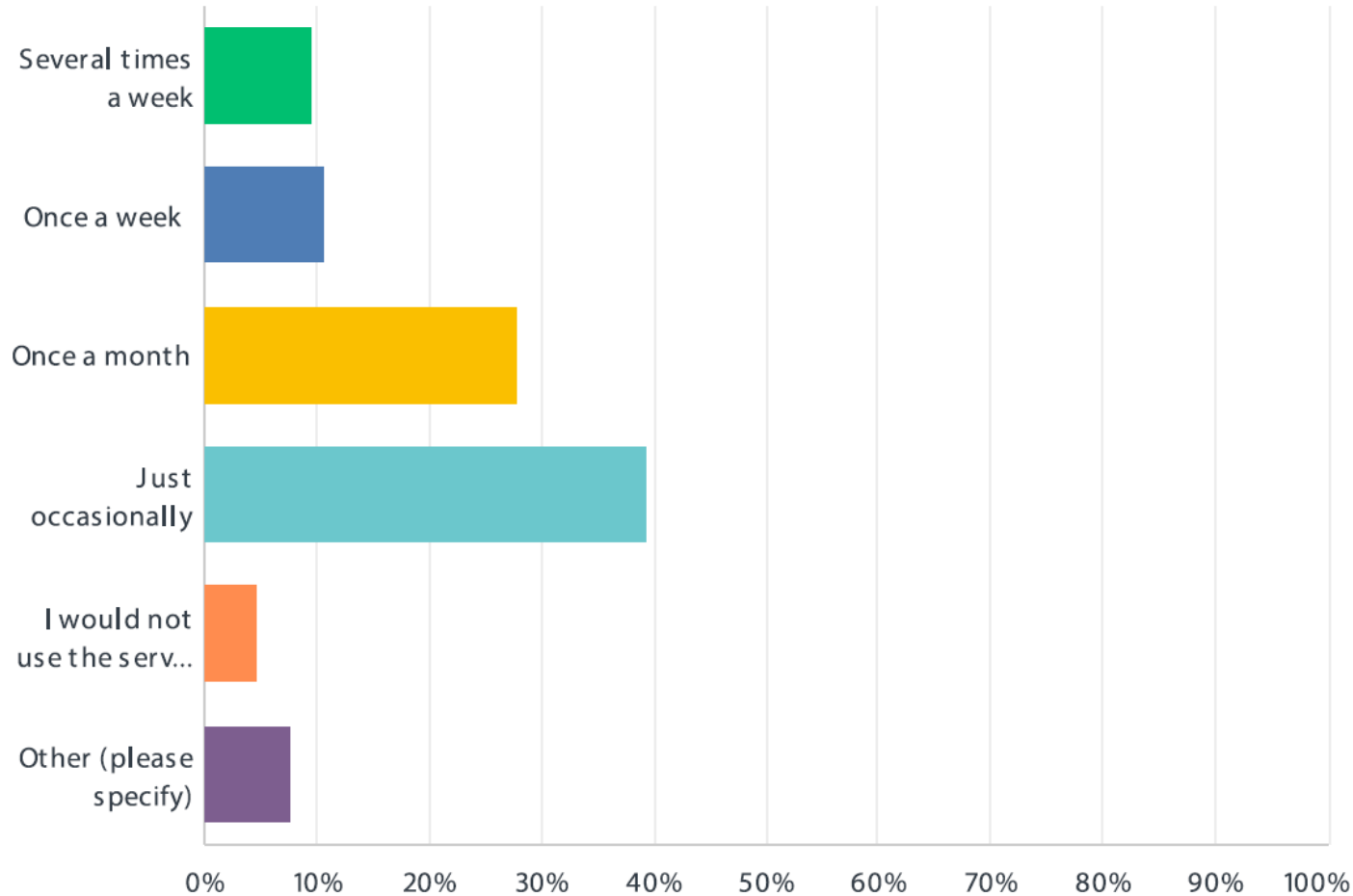
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QUESTION 8: What would you like to see included at the stations?



Review of Results from the North Valley Passenger Rail Questionnaire

9 QUESTION 9: How often would you use the North Valley Rail service?

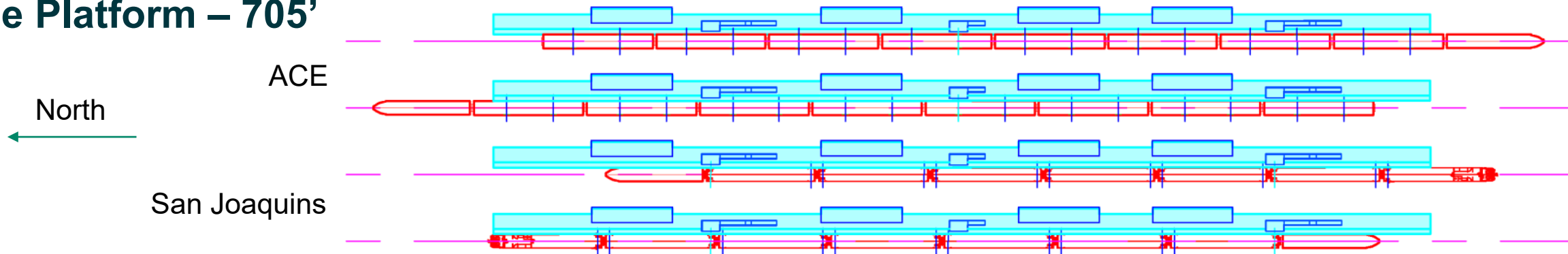


North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan **Platform Length Changes / Other Design Updates**

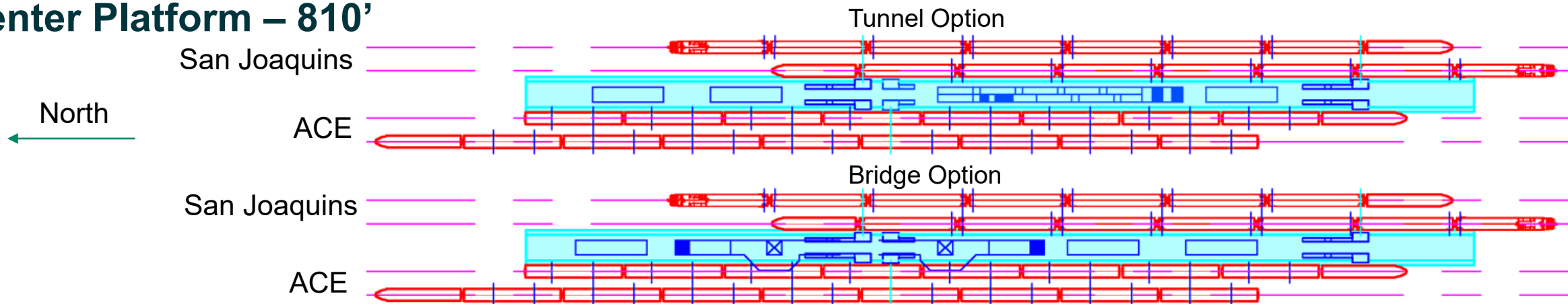
Daniel Hartman, AECOM

Platform Length Change

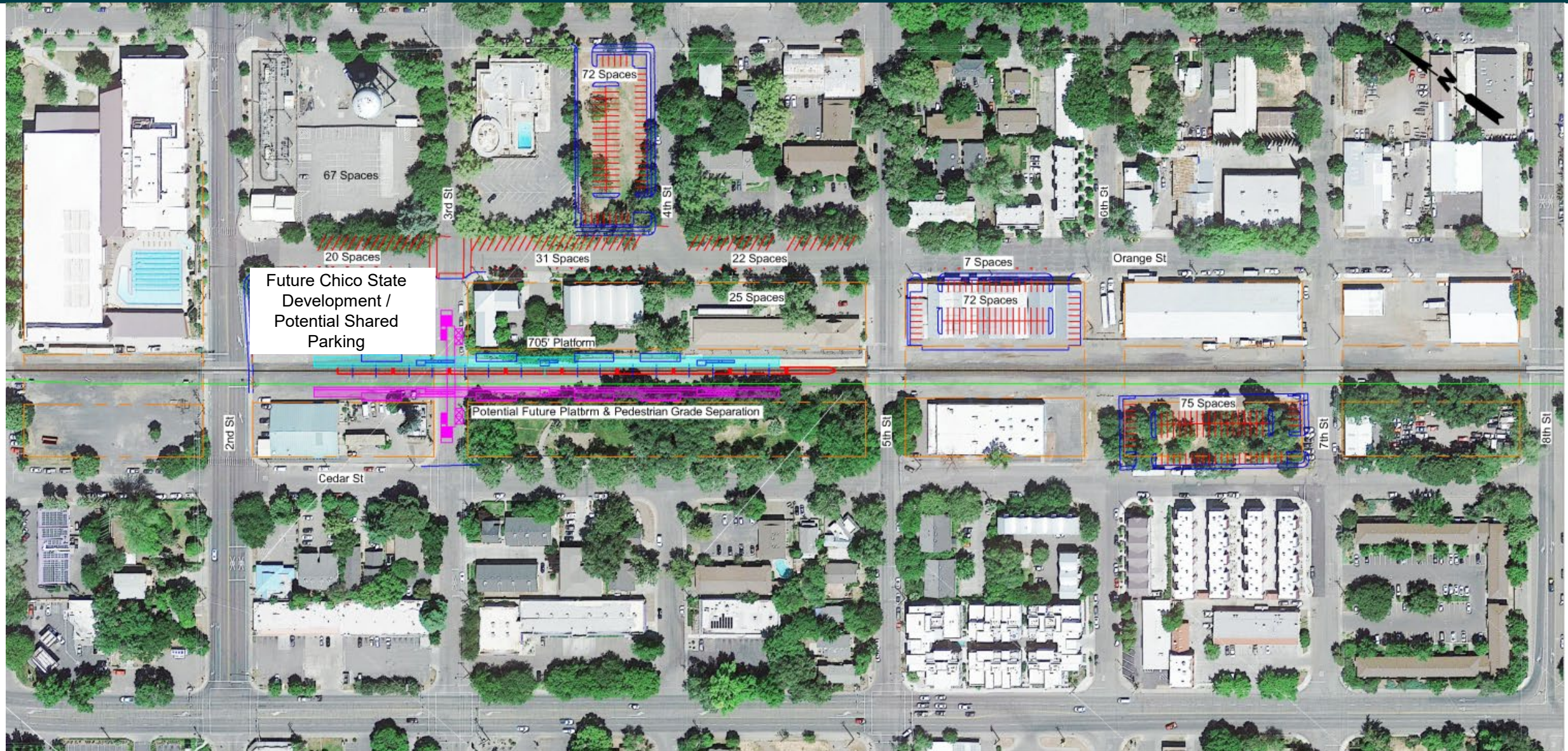
- Previous Platform Length – 975' for 10-car ACE Train
- Current Platform Length for 8-car ACE Train
 - Side Platform – 705'



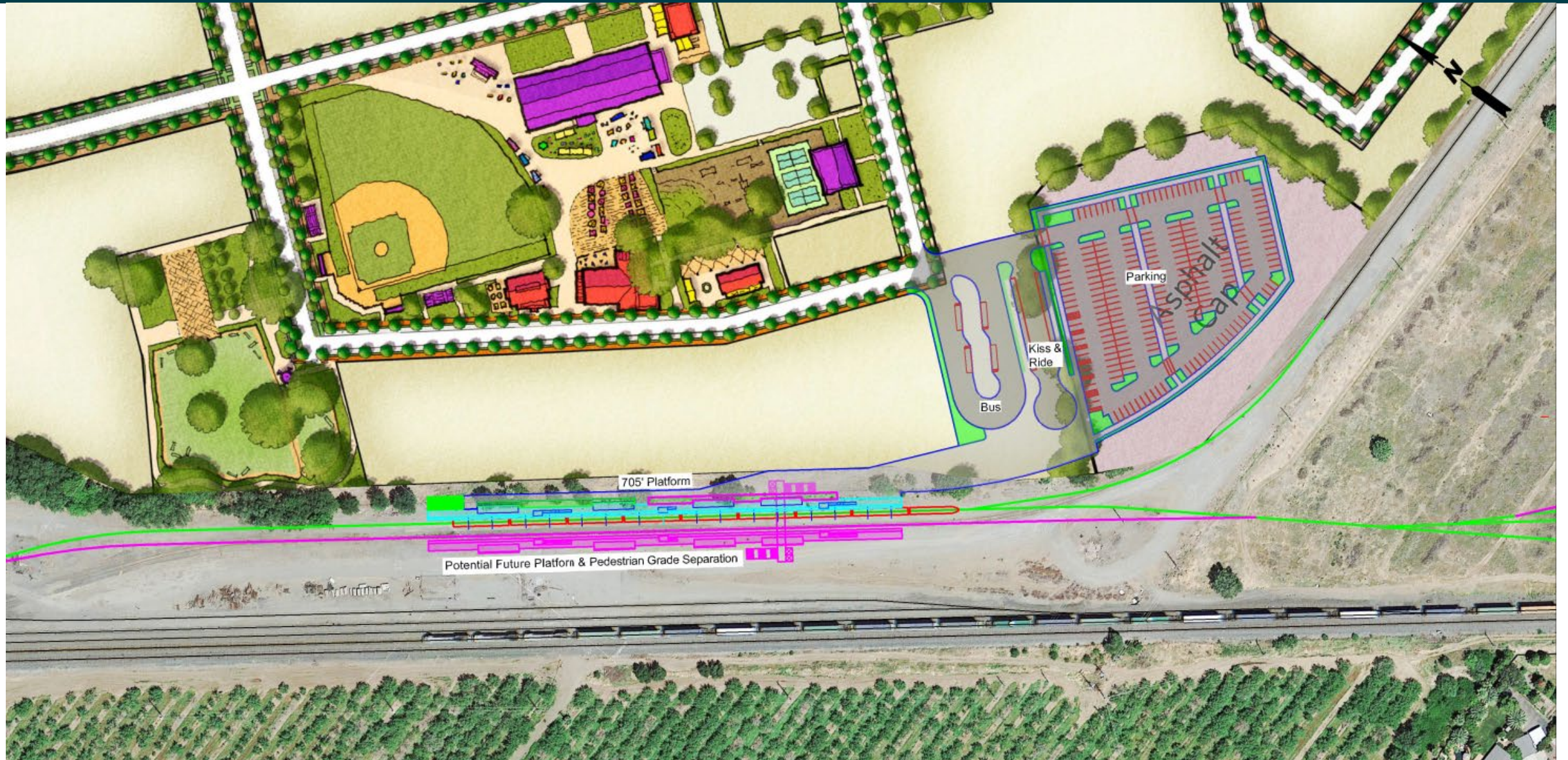
–Center Platform – 810'



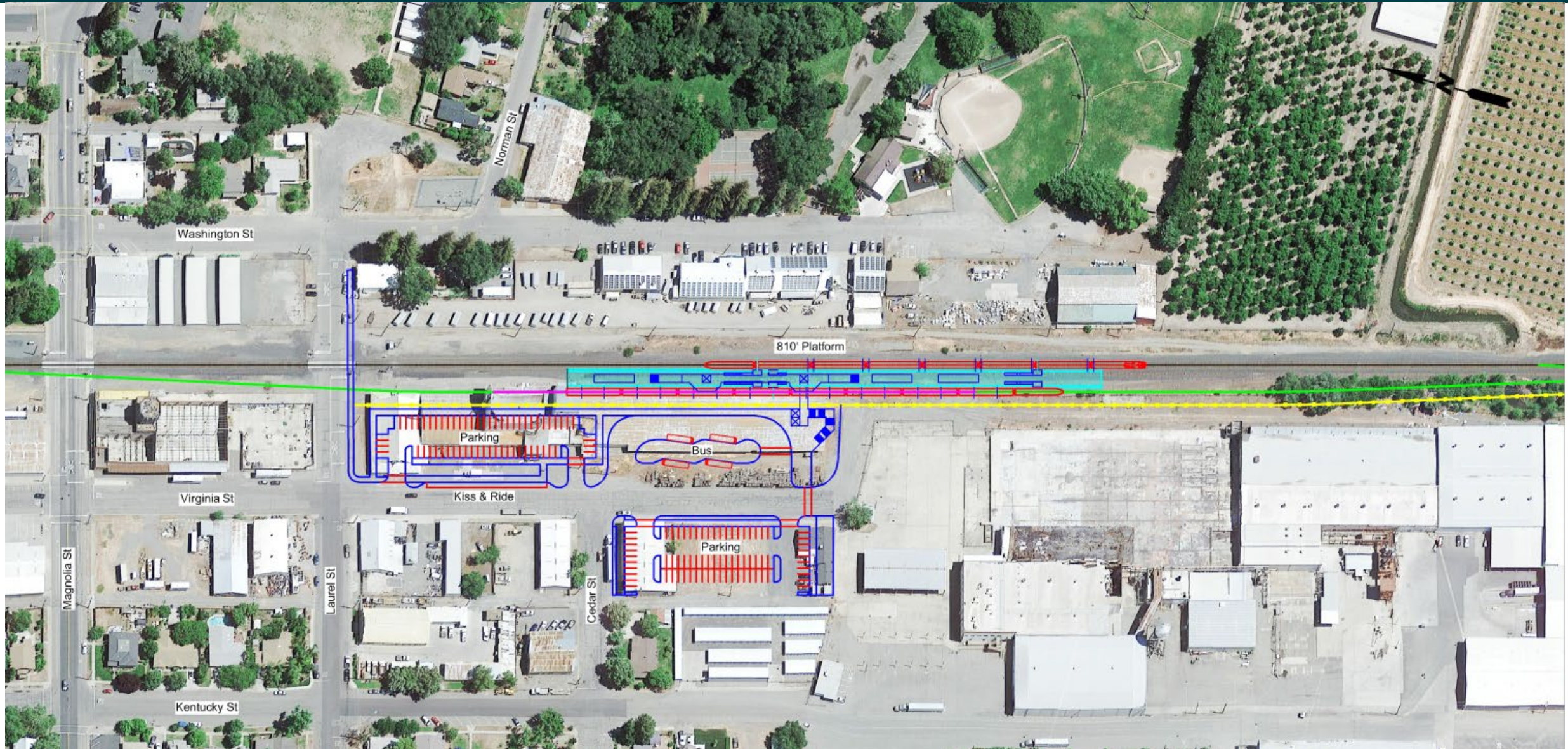
Chico Station Design Update – Downtown Option



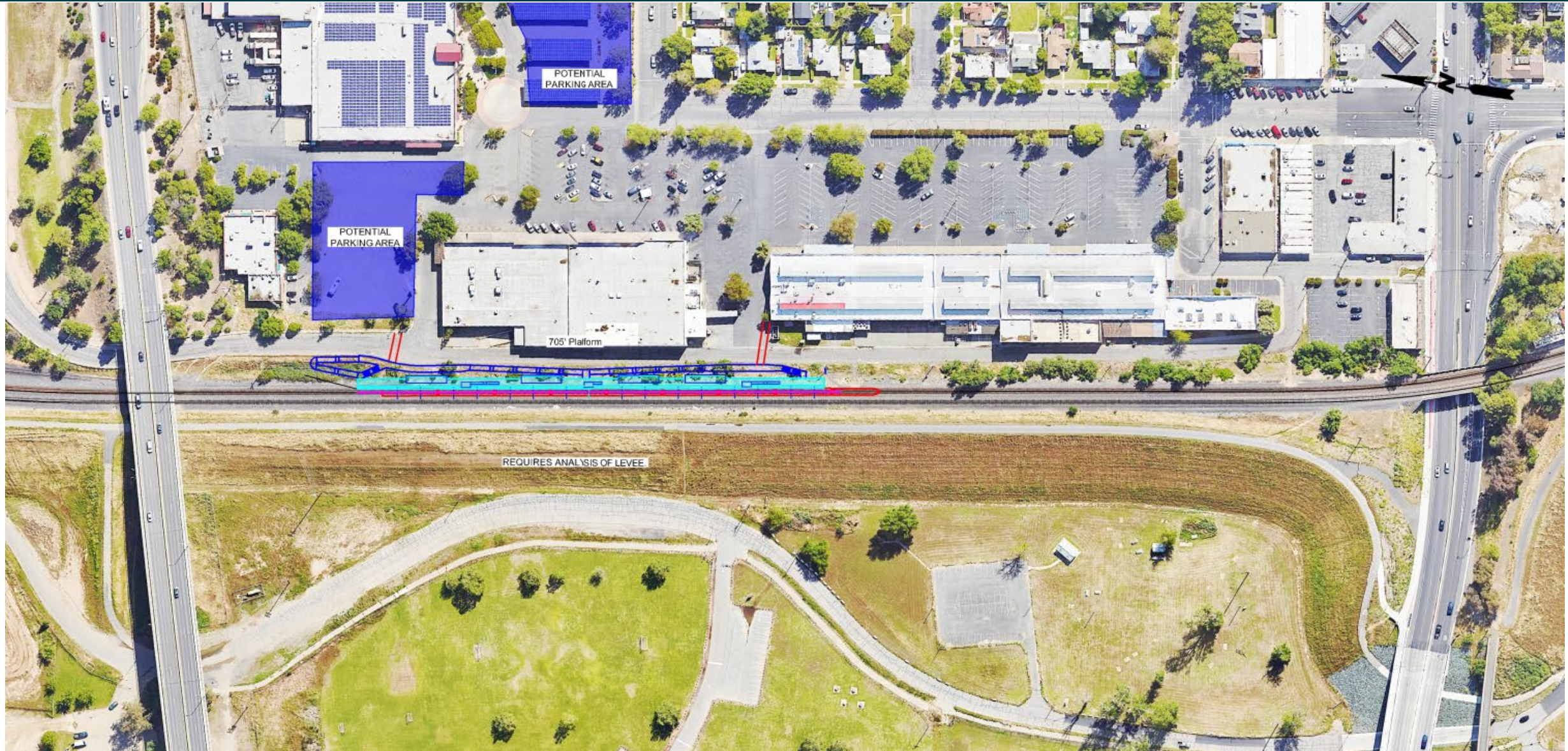
Chico Station Design Update – Barber Yard Option



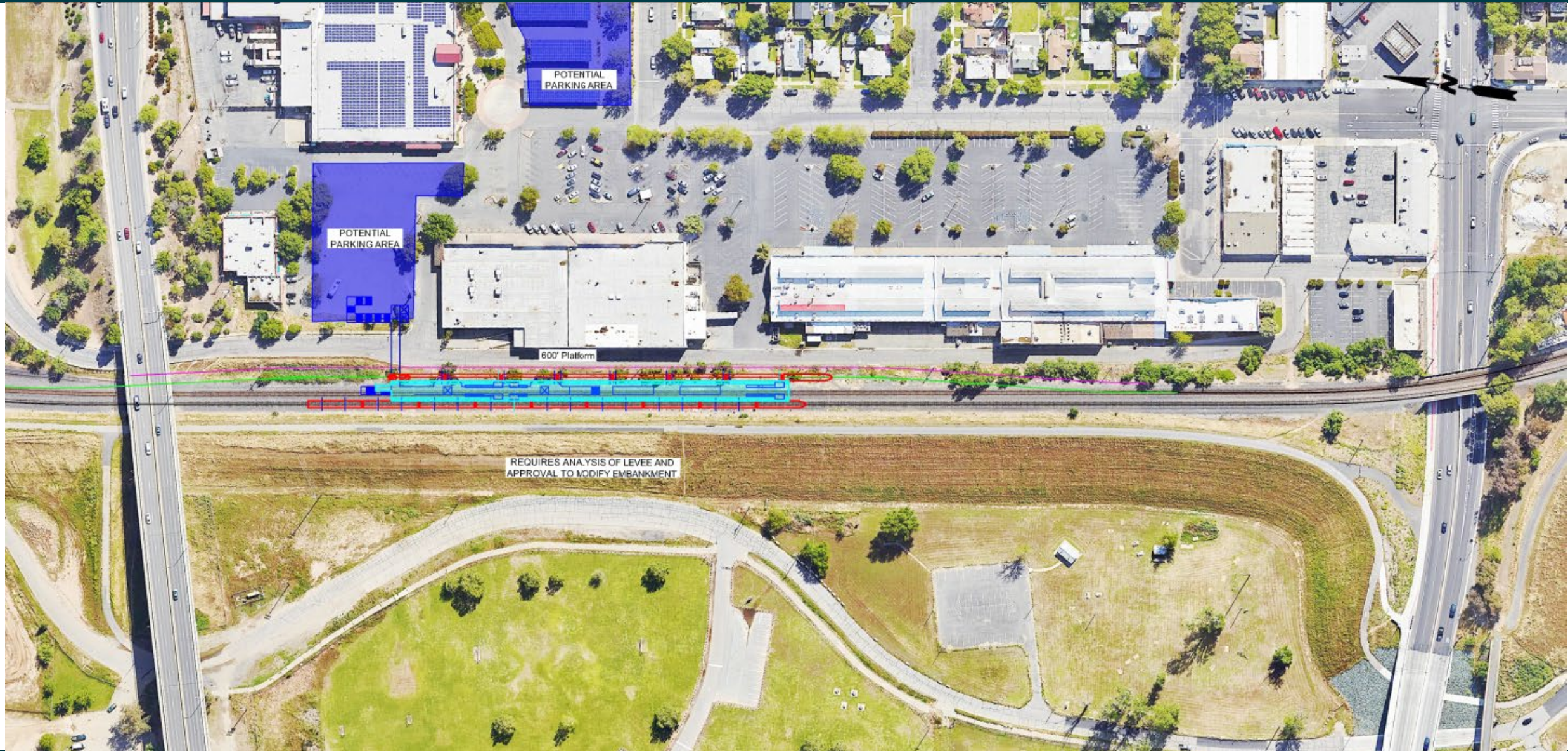
Gridley Station Design Update



Marysville-Yuba City Station Design Update – Option 1



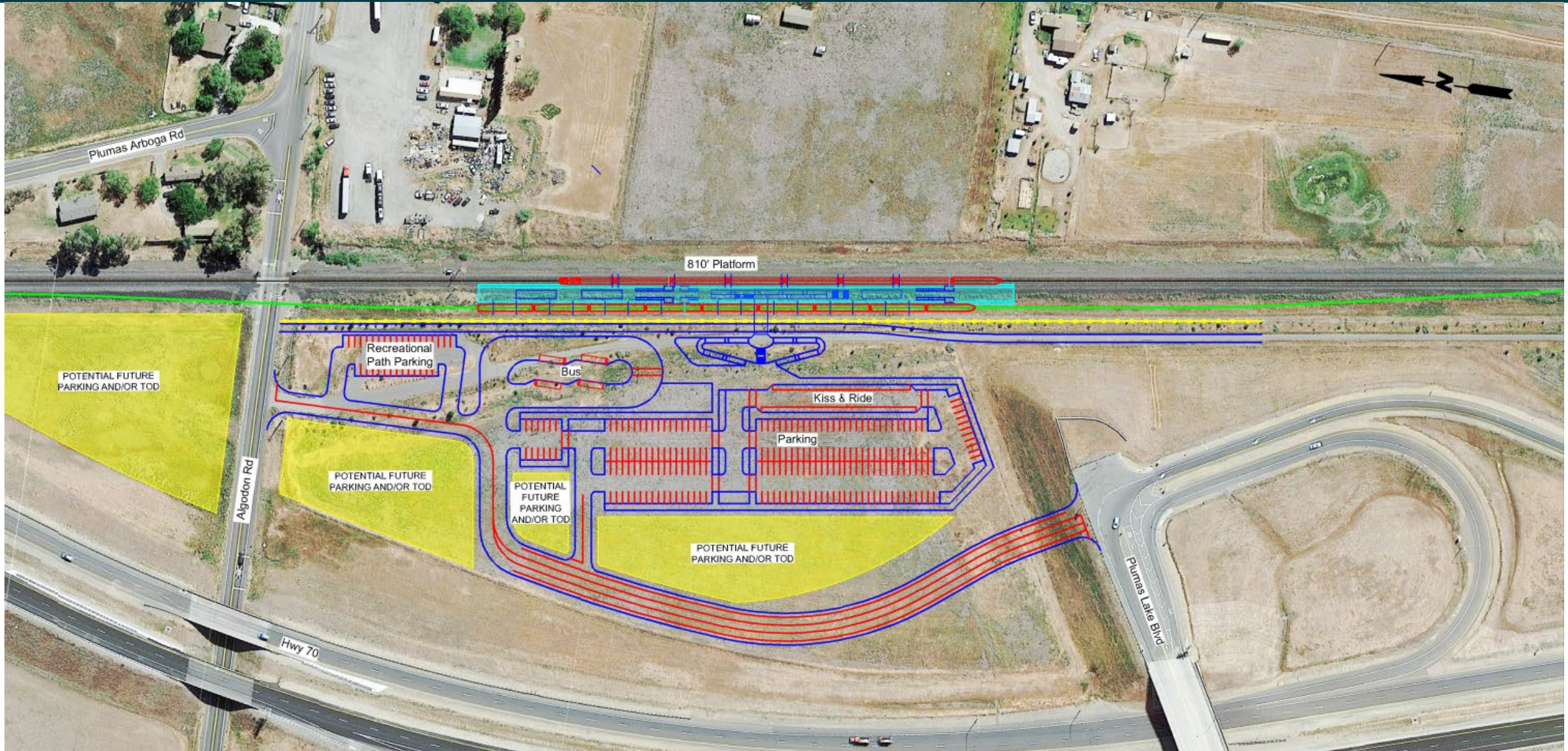
Marysville-Yuba City Station Design Update – Option 2



Marysville-Yuba City Station Design Update – Option 3



Plumas Lake Station Design Update



North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan **Ridership Analysis Results**

Daniel Krause, AECOM

Ridership Overview

- Concurrent effort covering entire expanded ACE and *San Joaquins* system by 2030
 - *Sacramento (Natomas) Extension*
 - *Lathrop to Ceres/Merced Extension (ACE)*
 - *Union City extension (ACE)*
 - *Timed HSR connections in Downtown Merced*
 - *Other planned service expansions*
- Forecasting work is complete
- Previously it was planned to provide two off-model post-Pandemic scenarios. Now post-pandemic effects have been included directly in the ridership forecasting model, with gradual (but not 100%) recovery extrapolated out to 2030 based on current ridership performance

Systemwide Summary

	2030 No Build	2030 Build*	Change
Annual ridership	7,883,100	8,475,200	+ 592,100
<i>Transfers with HSR**</i>	<i>1,984,500</i>	<i>2,056,900</i>	<i>+ 72,400</i>
Average daily ridership	21,598	23,220	+ 1,622
Annual avoided VMT	542,370,400	583,289,800	+ 40,919,400

**Build includes extension of four round trips trains from Natomas to Chico.*

***Out of four roundtrip North Valley Rail trains, two would connect directly to HSR in Merced, and one would connect to another Merced-bound San Joaquins train at Stockton San Joaquin Street Station that would connect to HSR.*

North Valley Stations Detail

Station	Annual ridership
Chico	198,400
Gridley*	91,900
Marysville—Yuba City	201,700
Plumas Lake	113,900

**Includes connecting bus transfers to/from Oroville*

Breakdown by Geographic Market

	Annual ridership
Internal (within North Valley)	91,000
External (North Valley to/from)	
Sacramento Area	258,000
San Joaquin Valley (North and Central)	96,600
San Francisco Bay Area	67,700
HSR: San Joaquin Valley (South) and Southern California	72,400

North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan **Fare Structure and Pricing Strategy Update**

Daniel Krause, AECOM

Fare Structure and Pricing Plan Update

Review of Context

- ACE and San Joaquins will both operate and serve stations in the North Valley
- ACE and San Joaquins currently have somewhat different fare structures and pricing
- In the future, both systems will be expanding and will share corridors and ridership markets

Existing ACE Fare/Pricing Structure

- ACE operates on a “first come, first served” basis without reserved seating.
- Tickets for ACE may be purchased on mobile devices via ACE’s mobile ticketing platform or paper tickets from approved ACE ticket vendors and at many ACE stations
- The fare structure is a distance-based system with five basic fare buckets (one-way, round-trip, 10-trip, 20-trip, and monthly).
- ACE also offers discounts for seniors, people with disabilities, and Medicare recipients. Student and low-income fares are also currently being piloted

Fare Structure and Pricing Plan Update

Existing San Joaquins Fare/Pricing Structure

- Reserved ticketing system
- Tickets can be purchased online through the Amtrak or San Joaquins websites, through the Amtrak mobile app, at Quik-Trak automated kiosks, by phone, and at ticket counters at staffed stations.
- Fares are calculated according to a distance-based formula.
- Fares are not 100% fixed as there is a “Saver” fare for those booking 7-days or more in advance.
- Like ACE, the San Joaquins offer discounts to seniors and people with disabilities. In addition, there are discounts for veterans, active military personnel, and students.
- There are also group discounts and various ticket “sales” to help lower travel costs that ACE doesn’t currently provide.

Fare Structure and Pricing Plan Update

Key Considerations

- Key considerations are based on discussions with SJRRC and SJJPA staff as part of this Study
- Fare policy for the North Valley Rail Service will need be a continuation of policy being developed for the Valley Rail Program by both agencies, given the service is an extension of Valley Rail service.
- Work was recently done by SJJPA on fare policy related to the San Joaquins that includes:
 - Improving equity in fares (i.e. consideration of means-based fares and other strategies to reduced the burden on disadvantaged communities); and
 - More structured approach to fare increases in the future.
- Any consideration of fare policy changes for ACE will build on upon the work being done for the San Joaquins, with the goal of integrating the fare structure/pricing policy for both as much as possible.
- Incorporation of the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP) tools will be a priority.

North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan **Cost Estimate Update**

Daniel Hartman, AECOM

Station and Layover Facility Costs

- \$270M to \$285M (in year of expenditure)
- Natomas Station expansion with station track
- Plumas Lake Station with station track
- Marysville/Yuba City Station
- Gridley Station with station track
- Chico Station with station track
- Chico Layover Facility

Capital Access Fees*

- Working with partners at the State to discuss the use of Capital Access Fees (CAF) in lieu of track improvements with UP.
- The State prefers incorporating CAF into new rail projects where possible
- UP has indicated an openness to considering CAF nationally
- CAF allows UP to increase capacity due to the project, but at a systemwide level, so the feds can be applied to other parts of the UP network

*Note: If UPRR decides on track improvements instead of Capital Access Fees, initial cost estimates for those improvements range from \$230M to \$245M in year-of-expenditure. These cost would be on top of the cost associated with the stations and layover facility.

North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan Funding and Financing Strategy Update

Daniel Krause, AECOM

Funding for Environmental Clearance and Preliminary Engineering

- Environmental clearance will include both CEQA and NEPA
- To fund the environmental clearance phase, 100% in State STIP-related funding is being pursued
- BCAG seeking to utilize \$2.5M in Regional Transportation Improvement Funds (RTIP) funds
- BCAG working with Caltrans District 3 to provide an additional \$2.5M in the Interregional Transportation Improvement Plan ITIP funds

Funding and Financing Strategy Update

Final Design and Construction – Candidate Funding and Financing Sources

– State funding sources being explored include:

- *Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)*
- *Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP)*
- *Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP)*
- *State Rail Assistance (SRA)*
- *Financing Option – Infrastructure State Revolving Fund (ISRF) Program*

– Federal funding/financing sources being explored include:

- *Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)*
- *Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)*
- *Corridor Identification and Development Program (Corridor ID)*
- *Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA)*
- *Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail*
- *Financing Options – Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program*

North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan **Station Visual Simulations**

Daniel Hartman, AECOM

Chico Station - Downtown



Chico Station - Downtown



Chico Station – Barber Yard



Chico Station – Barber Yard



Gridley Station



Marysville-Yuba City Station



Marysville-Yuba City Station



Plumas Lake Station



Plumas Lake Station



North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan **Sacramento Valley Station Access Analysis Update**

Chris Devine, BCAG

Sacramento Valley Station Access Analysis Update

Summary of Work

- Completed an initial analysis of the possibility of running North Valley trains to Sacramento Valley Station in the future
- Analyzed operational considerations and conducted a high-level infrastructure needs assessment
- This initial work was closely coordinated with Caltrans
- Caltrans will conduct further analysis, which is being scheduled shortly.
- Access will continue to be analyzed following completion of the Strategic Plan

North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan

Next Steps/Next Meeting

Chris Devine, BCAG

Ongoing Project Work

- Drafting of the Project Study Report Equivalent
- Drafting of the *North Valley Passenger Rail Strategic Plan*
- Conduct second round of public engagement
- Continue working to solidify funding for the next phase of project development, which is environmental clearance.

Project Development Team Meeting

- Target Timeframe: Early December 2023
- Review of the Project Study Report Equivalent and Draft Strategic Plan document will be the focus of the meeting

Virtual Public Meeting #2

- Target Timeframe: Mid-December 2023