

Redevelopment of the Railyards area, a 244-acre site in downtown Sacramento, offers a unique opportunity to reinforce and implement the City of Sacramento's (City) 2035 General Plan vision to be "the most livable city in America." The Railyards area has the potential to expand the role of the Central City as Sacramento's regional destination for employment; commerce; government; sports and entertainment; housing; and education, culture, and tourism and to create a transit-oriented mixed-use district as an integral extension of the Central Business District. The General Plan emphasizes the following six themes, which create the basic framework for updating the Railyards Specific Plan to match the City's current goals and policies:

- ◆ Making great places;
- ◆ Growing smarter;
- ◆ Maintaining a vibrant economy;
- ◆ Creating a healthy city;
- ◆ Living lightly-reducing our "carbon footprint"; and
- ◆ Developing a sustainable future.

By focusing on regional employment opportunities, cultural destinations, and high-quality residential neighborhoods, the Railyards Specific Plan advances the policies of the General Plan, which calls for improved land use efficiency and reduced GHG emissions through a healthy jobs-housing balance; multi-modal connectivity; urban centers with jobs, housing, shopping,

services, and transit; and advanced green building practices. This Sacramento Railyards Specific Plan supersedes the existing Railyards Specific Plan, last updated in 2007. The project site has the same Plan Area, with slight adjustments to the boundaries of the 2007 Plan.

The Railyards Specific Plan is the overarching policy document that guides development within the Railyards Plan Area, but it works together with three other documents that provide specific guidance on matters relating to urban design, development regulations, and permitting: the Railyards Design Guidelines, the Railyards Special Planning District Ordinance (SPD), and the Central Shops Historic District Ordinance. The Railyards Design Guidelines document, which provides design guidance in written and graphic form for private and public projects undertaken in the Railyards, aims to promote the improved aesthetic and functional quality of the Railyards community.

The purpose of the SPD is to implement the planning principles, goals, and policies of the Specific Plan by establishing necessary procedures and standards through zoning. The Historic District Ordinance will identify contributing resources and character-defining features and utilize development standards, pursuant to Chapter 17.604 (Historic Preservation) of the Sacramento Planned Development Code. In the interest of making

these documents as concise as possible, there is very little overlap among them. As such, parties who are interested in developing properties within the Railyards Plan Area must consult each of these four documents prior to construction.

The Railyards Specific Plan defines clear parameters for the future development of the Railyards area. Implementation of this Plan will create a unique mixed-use development consisting of regional destinations, commercial uses, office development, hotels, sports, entertainment and retail uses, with high-density residential neighborhoods that provide opportunities to live and work in the Central City and are supported by urban parks and plazas.

This chapter of the Railyards Specific Plan provides a description of the Plan Area, an overview of the development plan, and a description of the planning process that was followed to produce the document.

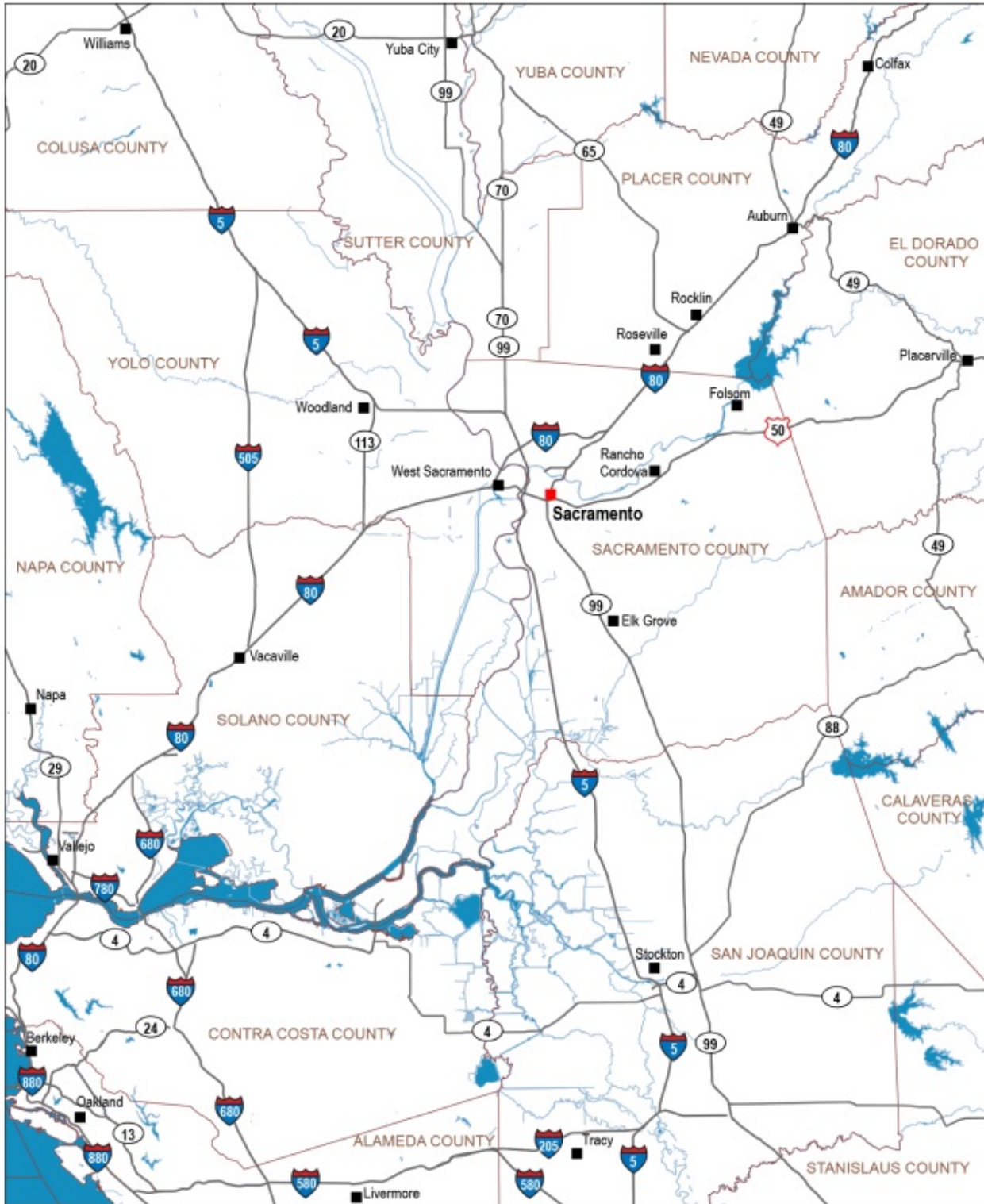
A. Plan Area

The following sections describe the regional and local settings of the Railyards Specific Plan Area.

1. Regional Location

As shown in Figure 1-1, the City is located in the north-central part of California, approximately equidistant from the coastline and the Nevada state line. In addition to being the state capital, it is also the largest city in Sacramento County as well as the county seat. The city covers approximately 100 square miles and, as of 2015, is home to over 480,000 people.¹

¹ DOF. E-1 Cities, Counties, and the State Population Estimates with Annual Percent Change— January 1, 2014 and 2015



Source: AECOM

Figure I-1. Regional Location

2. Plan Area

The 244-acre Plan Area is located immediately north of the Central Business District, east of the Sacramento River, south of North B Street and west of the federal courthouse and the Alkali Flat neighborhood. Figure 1-2 shows the various neighborhood districts surrounding the Plan Area. Figure 1-3 shows the Plan Area and the distribution of ownership on the Railyards site. The site sits between the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers, where the initial

settlement of the City of Sacramento was founded in 1849 along the banks of the Sacramento River. The Railyards is in close proximity to Old Sacramento, Downtown, Chinatown, the federal courthouse and local government offices, the Richards Boulevard industrial district, and the historic Alkali Flat neighborhood. A key element of this Plan is to knit the surrounding areas to the new districts and neighborhoods in the Railyards and allow for the downtown circulation grid to extend northward connecting to Richards Boulevard and the River District.

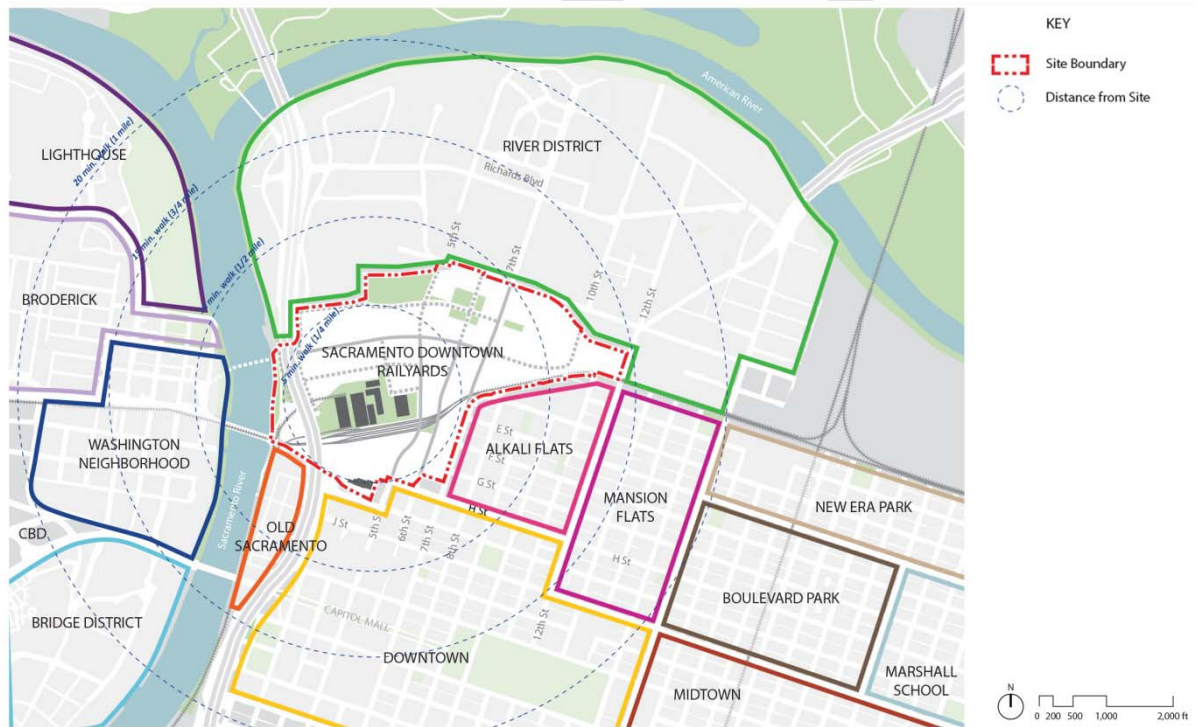


Figure 1-2. City of Sacramento Neighborhood Districts Map

Source: AECOM



Source: AECOM

Figure 1-3. Plan Area and Ownership

B. Planning Process

Previous studies for the Railyards Area and its immediate surroundings include the Sacramento Central City Community Plan, which was adopted on May 15, 1980 and last updated March 2015; the Central City Urban Design Guidelines, adopted in 2009; the Facility Element of the Railyards Specific Plan and the Richards Boulevard Area Plan, which were adopted by the City Council on December 1994; the River District Specific Plan, adopted in February 2011 and superseding the Richards Boulevard Area Plan; and the Railyards Special Planning District provisions in the Zoning Code, adopted in 1999 and last updated in 2013. A much more extensive public process was conducted since the completion of the 1999 Specific Plan, which led to the revised Specific Plan, Design Guidelines, SPD, and Central

Shops Historic District documents, adopted in 2007.

1. Community Outreach and Land Use Plan Evolution

Since 2002, the City has performed significant community outreach to determine how best to plan the Railyards. In 2004, the City conducted a Visioning Process for the development of the Railyards Area, which consisted of a series of public workshops to generate community input on the redevelopment of the Railyards area. The results of the visioning exercise helped to inform the planning process for the Railyards project. The majority of participants expressed a preference for higher-density housing, ground-floor retail, affordable units, and live/work space. They indicated a preference for a 24-hour mixed-use district that would not “close down after 5 p.m.” In terms of transportation, the participants expressed a

desire for a walkable and bikable community with close access to transit.

During the course of the next three years, several other community outreach efforts were made to further guide the development of the Railyards. A community workshop was held by the City and the then developer in May of 2006 to get additional feedback. Participants expressed interest in providing pedestrian and street connectivity; providing community facilities, such as schools, day-care facilities, better recreational spaces, and a mix of housing types and affordability; preserving the Central Shops; sustainability; establishing destination places, such as museums and a performing arts theater; celebrating railroad and cultural history; and ensuring high quality design. These community outreach efforts resulted in significant refinements to the plan from 2002 to 2007. The community's desirable attributes are still retained as part of the 2016 updates made to the 2007 Plan.

2. Specific Plan Objectives

The Railyards Specific Plan is the by-product of extensive comments from participants of the visioning process, community meetings, interested community groups, local business interests, City staff, City Commissions, the City Council, Sacramento County, and other local elected officials. Based on this input, the Specific Plan has been developed based on a framework that includes the following key objectives:

- ◆ Integrate the Railyards area into the fabric of the existing Central City, subject to the physical constraints created by the operating rail and transportation lines and topography. The Railyards has historically been isolated from the City.

Now the opportunity exists to increase the integration of the area from all points, not just downtown, into a more seamless patch of the City fabric.

- ◆ Create a dynamic 24-hour mixed-use, urban environment that provides a range of complementary uses, including cultural, office, hospitality, sports and entertainment, retail, health care, educational, and open space; and a mixture of housing products, including affordable housing.
- ◆ Connect the Railyards with Sacramento's downtown office, retail, tourism, residential, and government centers, as well as Old Sacramento, the River District area, and the adjacent Alkali Flat neighborhood, using pedestrian and bicycle connections, roadways, and public transportation routes.
- ◆ Connect the Railyards to the Sacramento River waterfront, and allow for hotel, public open space, residential waterfront and recreational uses, consistent with the vision of the 2003 Riverfront Master Plan that will result in a vibrant waterfront, valuable to the region and the City.
- ◆ Transform the Railyards from an underutilized and environmentally contaminated industrial site into a transit-oriented, attractive, and nationally renowned mixed-use urban environment.
- ◆ Capitalize on the historic Central Shops buildings as a heritage tourism draw and as inspiration for a mix of uses that will help to create a culturally-vibrant, urban community.
- ◆ Create a development that is a regional draw for the City of Sacramento due to its geographic location downtown near the

Sacramento River waterfront and its unique mix of transportation, residential, health care campus, cultural, office, hospitality, sports and entertainment, retail, and open space uses and historic sites.

- ◆ Provide a mixture of uses that complement and support the City's planned Sacramento Intermodal Transit Facility (SITF), connecting the Central City to the region, the state, and beyond.
- ◆ Create a sustainable community that utilizes green building technology, water conservation measures, and renewable energy sources.

C. *Specific Plan Components*

Under California Law (Government Code Section 65450 et seq.), cities and counties may adopt specific plans to develop policies, programs, and regulations to implement the jurisdiction's adopted General Plan. A specific plan serves as a bridge between the General Plan, community plans, the Zoning Code, and individual development master plans and planned unit developments, or other large development projects.

1. **Required Contents**

Although as a charter city the City is not bound by State planning statutes, this Specific Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Section 65451. As such, the Plan includes text and diagrams that generally describe the following:

- ◆ The distribution, location, and extent of all land uses, including open space.
- ◆ The proposed distribution, location, extent, and intensity of major components of public infrastructure, such as transportation and drainage systems and other essential facilities needed to support the land uses.
- ◆ Standards and criteria which specify how development of the Railyards area will proceed.
- ◆ A statement of consistency between the Specific Plan and the goals and policies contained in the General Plan.
- ◆ A program of implementation measures, such as regulations, programs, and public works projects, and financing measures necessary to complete the essential facilities to allow for development of the Plan Area.

2. **Consistency with the General Plan**

The policies and objectives of the Plan are consistent with the broad goals of the City of Sacramento 2035 General Plan. In general, the policies of the General Plan call for high-density, mixed-use development on the Railyards site. The Railyards is envisioned as an extension of the Central City, with a high intensity of both employment- and housing-related uses and a strong transit orientation. The following General Plan goals and policies related to land use and urban design are supported by this Specific Plan.

Land Use and Urban Design Element

GOAL LU 1.1: Growth and Change. Support sustainable growth and change through orderly and well-planned development that provides for the needs of existing and future residents and businesses, ensures the effective and equitable provision of public services, and makes efficient use of land and infrastructure.

Supporting Policy:

LU 1.1.1: Regional Leadership

GOAL LU 1.2: Sustainable Sacramento Strategy. Support statewide and regional efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, fund transportation improvements, and meet housing needs.

GOAL LU 2.1: City of Neighborhoods.

Maintain a city of diverse, distinct, and well-structured neighborhoods that meet the community's needs for complete, sustainable, and high-quality living environments, from the historic downtown core to well-integrated new growth areas.

Supporting Policy:

LU 2.1.3: Complete and Well-Structured Neighborhoods

GOAL LU 2.2: City of Rivers. Preserve and enhance Sacramento's riverfronts as signature features and destinations within the city and maximize riverfront access from adjoining neighborhoods to facilitate public enjoyment of this unique open space resource.

Supporting Policies:

LU 2.2.1: World-Class Rivers.

LU 2.2.3: Improving River Development and Access.

GOAL LU 2.3: City of Trees and Open

Spaces. Maintain multi-functional "green infrastructure" consisting of natural areas, open space, urban forest, and parkland, which serves as a defining physical feature of Sacramento, provides visitors and residents with access to open space and recreation, and is designed for environmental sustainability.

Supporting Policy:

LU 2.3.1: Open Space System

GOAL LU 2.4: City of Distinctive and

Memorable Places. Promote community design that produces a distinctive, high-quality built environment whose forms and character reflect Sacramento's unique historic, environmental, and architectural context, and create memorable places that enrich community life.

Supporting Policies:

LU 2.4.1: Unique Sense of Place

LU 2.4.2: Responsiveness to Context

LU 2.4.3: Enhanced City Gateways

LU 2.4.4: Iconic Buildings

GOAL LU 2.5: City Connected and

Accessible. Promote the development of an urban pattern of well-connected, integrated, and accessible neighborhoods corridors, and centers.

Supporting Policy:

LU 2.5.1: Connected Neighborhoods, Corridors, and Centers

GOAL LU 2.6: City Sustained and Renewed.

Promote sustainable development and land use practices in both new development, reuse, and reinvestment that provide for the transformation of Sacramento into a sustainable urban city while preserving

choices (e.g., where to live, work, and recreate) for future generations.

Supporting Policies:

LU 2.6.1: Sustainable Development Patterns

LU 2.6.2: Transit-Oriented Development

GOAL LU 2.7: City Form and Structure.

Require excellence in the design of the city’s form and structure through development standards and clear design direction.

Supporting Policies:

LU 2.7.2: Design Review

LU 2.7.3: Transitions in Scale

LU 2.7.5: Development along Freeways

LU 2.7.6: Walkable Blocks

LU 2.7.7: Buildings that Engage the Street

LU 2.7.8: Screening of Off-street Parking

GOAL LU 5.1: Centers. Promote the development throughout the city of distinct, well-designed mixed-use centers that are efficiently served by transit, provide higher-density, urban housing opportunities and serve as centers of civic, cultural, and economic life for Sacramento’s neighborhoods and the region.

Supporting Policies:

LU 5.1.1: Diverse Centers

LU 5.1.2: Centers Served by Transit

LU 5.1.3: Cultural and Entertainment Centers

LU 5.1.4: Vertical and Horizontal Mixed-Use

GOAL LU 5.6: Central Business District.

Promote the Central Business District (CBD) as the regional center of the greater Sacramento area for living, commerce, culture, and government.

Supporting Policies:

LU 5.6.1: Downtown Center Development

LU 5.6.6: Central City Development Projects

GOAL LU 8.1: Public/Quasi-Public. Provide for governmental, utility, institutional, educational, cultural, religious, and social facilities and services that are located and designed to complement Sacramento’s neighborhoods, centers, and corridors and to minimize incompatibility with neighborhoods and other sensitive uses.

Supporting Policy:

LU 8.1.1: Public Places

LU 8.1.13: Medical Centers

Mobility Element

GOAL M 2.1: Integrated Pedestrian System.

Design, construct, and maintain a universally accessible, safe, convenient, integrated and well-connected pedestrian system that promotes walking.

Supporting Policies:

M 2.1.2: Sidewalk Design

M 2.1.3: Streetscape Design

M 2.1.4: Cohesive and Continuous Network

M 2.1.5: Housing and Destination Connections

GOAL M 4.2: Complete Streets. The City shall plan, design, operate and maintain all streets and roadways to accommodate and promote safe and convenient travel for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities, as well as freight and motor vehicle drivers.

Supporting Policy

M 4.2.2: Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Streets

GOAL M 5.1: Integrated Bicycle System. Create and maintain a safe, comprehensive, and integrated bicycle system and set of support facilities throughout the city that encourage bicycling that is accessible to all. Provide bicycle facilities, programs and services and implement other transportation and land use policies as necessary to achieve the City’s bicycle mode share goal as documented in the Bicycle Master Plan.

In addition to providing a plan that will further the preceding goals, policies, and actions, this Specific Plan is consistent with other provisions of the General Plan, including the Mobility Element regarding pedestrian and bicycle circulation and parking, as well as goals and policies in the General Plan’s Housing Element, the Historic and Cultural Resources Element, Economic Development Element, Utilities Element, Education, Recreation, and Culture Element, Environmental Resources Element, Public Health and Safety Element, Open Space, and Environmental Constraints Element of the General Plan.

D. Plan Contents

The Specific Plan includes the following chapters:

- ◆ **Chapter One** is this introduction, which includes an overview of the Plan Area, a description of the process for development of the Specific Plan, its consistency with the General Plan, and the components of the Plan.
- ◆ **Chapter Two** provides an overview of the history of the site and its relationship to existing development in the City of Sacramento.
- ◆ **Chapter Three** provides an overview of the major concepts of the Specific Plan, including an overview of each of the neighborhoods and districts that will comprise the Railyards as it is redeveloped and describes the new zoning designations for the Plan Area.
- ◆ **Chapter Four** contains a set of overriding principles for future development of the Plan Area, followed by the goals and policies that will guide that development.
- ◆ **Chapter Five** describes the proposed program of parks and open space that will be available to Railyards residents and the general public.
- ◆ **Chapter Six** contains a summary of the proposed circulation pattern, including specifications for designs of new major streets in the Plan Area; improvements to the existing Sacramento Valley Station, which serves Amtrak, Capitol Corridor, San Joaquin Corridor, light rail passengers; and pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

- ◆ **Chapter Seven** describes the proposed infrastructure and public services needed to serve development of the Plan Area.
- ◆ **Chapter Eight** describes the Railyards' historic and cultural resources and the designation of a historic district to preserve those resources.
- ◆ **Chapter Nine** contains an overview of the environmental remediation efforts, status of site readiness for planned redevelopment, and approach to monitor and implement environmental remediation in accordance with state and local laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards.
- ◆ **Chapter Ten** contains specific implementation strategies.

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