

PERRIS VALLEY LINE

A project of the Riverside County Transportation Commission

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

The Riverside County Transportation Commission has completed its study of the environmental effects of the Perris Valley Line under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is ready for public review and comment. The Draft EIR will be available online at www.perrisvalleyline.info. Hard copies are also available for review at the following locations during normal working/operating hours with the exception noted:

RCTC Office

4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor
Riverside, CA 92502-2208
(Monday through Thursday only)

Riverside Public Library

3581 Mission Inn Avenue
Riverside, CA 92501

Moreno Valley Public Library

25480 Alessandro Boulevard
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Perris Branch Library

163 E. San Jacinto Avenue
Perris, CA 92570

Woodcrest Library

16625 Krameria Avenue
Riverside, CA 92504

PUBLIC HEARINGS

WHERE YOU COME IN

Have the potential impacts been addressed? Do you have information that should be included? Your comments will become part of the public record. If you wish to make a comment on the Draft EIR, you may submit your written comments postmarked no later than May 24, 2010 to:

Ms. Edda Rosso, Capital Projects Manager
Riverside County Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 12008
Riverside, CA 92502-2208

For more information on the Perris Valley Line or any other RCTC projects, please call (951) 787-7141 or visit on-line at www.rctc.org.

Two public hearings will be held:

Wednesday, April 14, 2010 at 9:30 AM

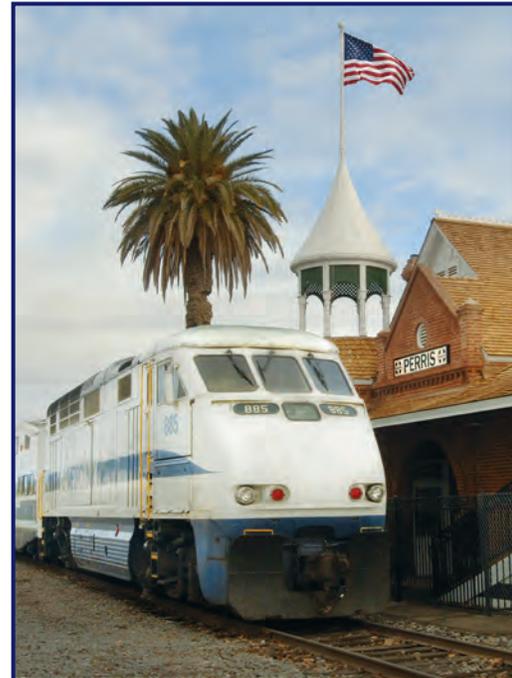
Riverside County Administrative Center
Board Room
4080 Lemon Street
Main Floor
Riverside, CA 92502-2208

Thursday, April 22, 2010 at 6:00 PM

City of Perris City Council Chambers
(corner of San Jacinto and
Perris Boulevard)
101 North "D" Street
Perris, California 92570

WHAT IS THE PERRIS VALLEY LINE?

The Perris Valley Line would extend Metrolink service 24 miles farther into Riverside County, directly serving the communities of Riverside, Moreno Valley, and Perris. The service would extend the existing Metrolink 91 Line, which currently runs to Fullerton and Los Angeles, bringing commuter rail service to major employment centers as well as communities in southern Riverside County. The Perris Valley Line is tentatively scheduled to open in late 2012 with four new stations: Hunter Park area, Moreno Valley/March Field, Downtown Perris, and South Perris. The Perris Valley Line will run in an existing freight corridor, constructed more than 120 years ago, adjacent to the I-215.



WHY IS THE PERRIS VALLEY LINE NEEDED?

Riverside County is one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation, projected to reach 3 million people by 2020. By that time, the number of vehicles using the I-215 Corridor is expected to increase significantly. The Perris Valley Line would help relieve traffic congestion along its entire route, improving conditions on the I-215, SR-60, and SR-91.

The Perris Valley Line would attract an estimated 4,350 riders daily, providing them a 40-minute commute from South Perris to downtown Riverside compared to the projected 80-minute commute for rush hour traffic in 2025. The service would eliminate thousands of vehicle trips per day on I-215 and SR-60 and serve commuters from the cities of Temecula, Murrieta, Menifee, Perris, Moreno Valley, Hemet, and San Jacinto.





PERRIS VALLEY LINE



WHERE IS THE PERRIS VALLEY LINE LOCATED?

WHAT IS PLANNED?

The Perris Valley Line is located within the right-of-way of the existing 120-year old San Jacinto Branch Line. The project would include track rehabilitation with welded rails, new track for a 9-mile segment parallel to I-215 south of Box Springs Road and north of Nuevo Road, a new connection with BNSF north of the city of Riverside called the Citrus Connection, track relocated to a new platform at Perris Station, four new stations, and a layover facility.

The four stations would be constructed to Metrolink standards and feature a platform with track-side canopy structures, ticket kiosks, schedule information, and low-water use landscaping. The layover facility would be constructed near the South Perris Station.

Enhancements would be made at over 15 existing grade crossings and could include flashing warning devices, gates, raised center medians, striping, signing and pavement markings, crossing safety lighting, and pedestrian safety improvements.

As a part of upgrading the track, two existing bridges over the San Jacinto River would be replaced.



HOW WAS THE PERRIS VALLEY LINE DEVELOPED?

After the successful launch of Metrolink in 1992, RCTC took steps to leverage the potential for commuter rail as a solution to growing traffic congestion by purchasing the San Jacinto Branch Line from Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) in 1993.

In 2002, RCTC created the Perris Valley Line project, holding a series of six public meetings. In early 2004, RCTC, with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), conducted an Alternatives Analysis to evaluate transit options for alleviating current and forecasted transportation deficiencies. This included a no-project option that studied projected roadway planning efforts, an express bus service, and new commuter rail service. Commuter rail was found to offer the best alternative to congested roadways, improving mobility for residents and commuters and also contributing to reduced congestion.

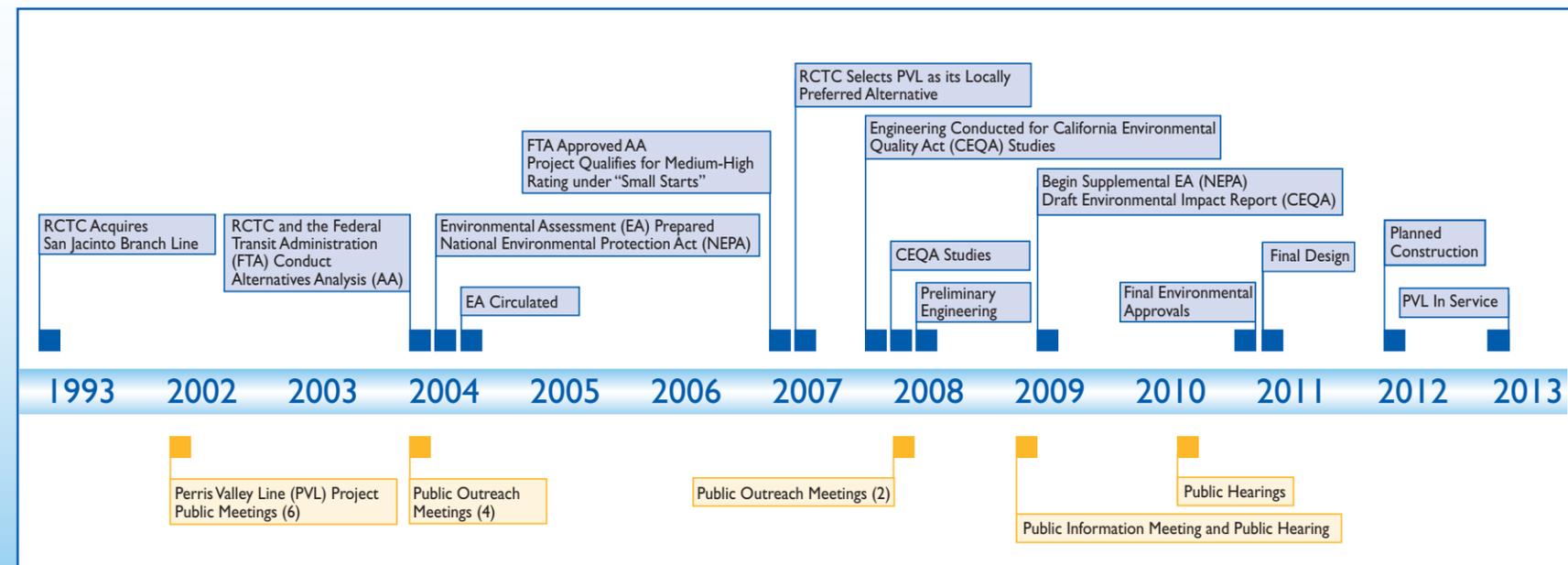
In order to qualify the Perris Valley Line project for federal funding, a federal Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared. Four public outreach meetings were held and the EA was circulated for review and comment.

In 2007, FTA qualified the project for funding with a medium-high rating under

the "Small Starts" portion of the "New Starts" grant program. RCTC has selected the Perris Valley Line project as its locally preferred alternative for providing public transit service to the area.

In 2008 engineering was conducted in order to complete studies under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and discover what, if any, environmental impacts might result from the project. During the process, engineering was modified to minimize environmental impacts and two public outreach meetings were held to update the community.

Based upon the feedback from the community, in 2009, both FTA and RCTC decided to conduct further studies. FTA required a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to refresh the 2004 information and to obtain new public comment. RCTC decided to prepare a Draft EIR under CEQA in order to clarify concerns and address new station site options. The Draft EIR is now released for public comment. Close of the public comment period will be May 24, 2010. Both sets of studies are expected to be completed in fall of 2010.



HOW ARE COMMUNITY CONCERNS BEING ADDRESSED?

RCTC has held a total of 14 community meetings since beginning the project. Public input at these meetings has led to changes in the design of the project. The public's primary concerns throughout the process have been safety, noise, and rail traffic.

SAFETY:

Safety is a priority for RCTC and Metrolink. The Perris Valley Line would employ a comprehensive strategy of safety measures to systematically reduce the opportunity for accidents at grade crossings.

Fifteen existing grade crossings would be improved with measures that could include flashing warning devices, gates, raised center medians, striping, signing and pavement markings, crossing safety lighting, and pedestrian safety improvements.

Federal law mandates that railroads have positive train control (PTC) in place by 2015. Although the specific technology has not been prescribed, Metrolink and the railroads are developing plans to meet that mandate.

NOISE:

Upgrades to the tracks with improvements to the rail bed and welded rail would mean less noise and vibration from rail traffic. Not only would the Metrolink trains be quieter, but existing freight traffic will be quieter as well. In addition, noise will be mitigated through the use of sound barriers in certain areas.

There is also a federal standard for cities and counties to apply for and create "Quiet Zones" where train horns and whistles are not used. Quiet Zones require extra safety measures to compensate for the non-use of the warning whistles and horns. These safety measures may include four quadrant gates, one-way streets with signs, and medians. It is the responsibility of the city or county that owns the roadway at the crossing to apply for and fund a Quiet Zone.

RAIL TRAFFIC:

The Perris Valley Line corridor has been used for freight since the 1880s.

When RCTC purchased the San Jacinto Branch Line track from BNSF, BNSF retained freight operating rights on the track. Metrolink trains, however, would receive priority for operation. The new Perris Valley Line service would add six round trips per day to the existing rail traffic.

RCTC conducted a rail study on future freight demand and found that economic factors would play a larger role in determining freight use than track improvements. In fact, freight traffic could increase on the line to meet possible future increased demand even if no upgrades were made.



Grade crossing with raised center medians and safety gates



Grade crossing with quad gates

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PERRIS VALLEY LINE PROJECT
Riverside County
Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 12008
Riverside, CA 92502

