



**VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(SPBLAC)**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2011
3:30 – 5 PM**

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AGENDA*

**Actions may be taken on any item listed on the agenda*

**VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM
950 COUNTY SQUARE DRIVE - SUITE 108
VENTURA, CA 93003**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Government Code Section 54954.2, if special assistance is needed to participate in a Commission meeting, please contact the Clerk of the Board at (805) 642-1591 ext 101. Notification of at least 48 hours prior to meeting time will assist staff in assuring that reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility at the meeting.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (For items not on the agenda)– *Each individual speaker is limited to speak three (3) continuous minutes or less. Any written documents to be distributed or presented to the Commission shall be submitted to VCTC SPBLAC staff. This policy applies to Public Comments and comments on Agenda Items.*

Under the Brown Act, SPBLAC should not take action on or discuss matters raised during Public Comment portion of the agenda which are not listed on the agenda. SPBLAC members may refer such matters to staff for factual information or to be placed on the subsequent agenda for consideration.

- 4. APPROVE SUMMARY FROM MARCH 3, 2011 SPBLAC MEETING – PG. 3**

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER/STAFF REPORT

This item provides the opportunity for the SPBLAC members VCTC staff to report on attended meetings and any other items related to SPBLAC activities.

6. ADDITIONS/REVISIONS – *The SPBLAC may add an item to the Agenda after making a finding that there is a need to take immediate action on the item and that the item came to the attention of the SPBLAC subsequent to the posting of the agenda. An action adding an item to the agenda requires 2/3 vote of the SPBLAC. If there are less than 2/3 of the SPBLAC members present, adding an item to the agenda requires a unanimous vote. Added items will be placed for discussion at the end of the agenda.*

7. SANTA PAULA REQUEST TO ANNEX A PORTION OF THE SBPL – PG. 5

Recommended Action:

Approve the request from the City of Santa Paula to annex a portion of the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) into the City's East Area Project Phase II.

Responsible Staff: Mary Travis

8. FRA REQUIRED SPBL RAIL BRIDGE INVENTORY PROJECT UPDATE – PG. 8

Recommended Action:

Receive and file update report.

Responsible Staff: Mary Travis

9. FREIGHT OPERATIONS ON THE SPBL UPDATE – PG. 9

Recommended Action:

Approve staff initiatives to improve freight operations on the SPBL.

Responsible Staff: Darren Kettle

10. FUTURE MEETINGS

Recommended Action:

Approve tentative date for next SPBLAC meeting.

Responsible Staff: Mary Travis

11. ADJOURNMENT



Item # 4

Summary of 3/3/11 SPBLAC Meeting

- Item # 1. **Call to Order/Self Introductions:**
The meeting was called to order at the VCTC Conference Room at 2:30 PM. Attending the meeting were Commissioners Patti Walker, Kathy Long and Ralph Fernandez. Also attending were Dave Wilkinson, Bill Bartels, Martin Hernandez, Kathy Connell, and, Dave Fleisch, and VCTC staff members Darren Kettle and Mary Travis.
- Item # 2. **Approval of 9/8/10 SPBLAC Meeting Summary:**
The meeting summary was approved.
- Item # 3. **Update on SPBL Maintenance Operations:**
Staff updated the Committee on the ongoing discussions with all parties involved in SPBL operations. In accordance with the existing agreements, from now on, the City of Fillmore will be working with the Fillmore & Western (F&W) Railroad to maintain the tracks on the "Fillmore Segment" between Santa Paula and Rancho Camulos. VCTC, working with F&W, will maintain the tracks between Montalvo and Santa Paula, and also, will continue to maintain the property outside the 15-foot track area. Also, in the area of increased freight service, discussions with Union Pacific Railroad are still continuing.
- Item # 4. **Draft FY 2011/12 Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) Project Budget:**
Staff reviewed the proposed FY 2011/12 budget for continued operation and administration of the Santa Paula Branch Line. The draft budget totals \$597.650 and includes funds for administration and maintenance of the SPBL. After review, the Committee recommended the SPBL budget be forwarded to the Commission for approval.
- Item # 5. **Circulation of Request for Proposals for Federal Railroad Administration Bridge inventory Program:**
Staff reviewed the Federal Railroad Bridge Inventory requirement and staff recommendation to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant assistance to complete the necessary work. The federal deadline for completion of the first phase of the project is September 13, 2012. After the initial inventory is completed, the capacity of each of the rail bridges will have to be calculated under Phase II of the requirement. After discussion, the Committee recommended the RFP be forwarded to the Commission for approval.
- Item # 6. **Solicitation of Firms for SPBL and Coast Main Line Right-of-Way Services:**
Staff reviewed the current arrangements for right-of-way maintenance on the SPBL and Coast Main Line properties owned by VCTC. The maintenance has been handled on an as-needed basis for several years by the Fillmore & Western Railway (F&W) and Van Nortwick & Associates on the Coast Main. Both F&W &

Van Nortwick crews are certified and insured to work next to operating rail lines, and both companies have performed in an excellent and efficient manner. However, to make sure the work is handled in the most competitive way, staff will seek proposals from other firms to ensure the price paid is the best for the needed work. After discussion, the Committee authorized staff to seek comparative prices for right-of-way maintenance to establish a “bench” of firms that can be retained as needed.

Item # 7.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Inventory of Signals/Grade Crossings by Fillmore & Western Railway (F&W):

Staff reviewed the FRA requirement that all owners of railroad property have a current and updated inventory of signal equipment and grade crossings. Rail owners are subject to fines if this information is not available upon request by the FRA inspectors. Because this is a matter of urgency, and because F&W already have much of the needed inventory information on file, it is recommended F&W be approved to complete the necessary inventory work. Funding for the project has been included in the FY 2011/12 SPBL budget. The Committee approved this recommendation be forwarded to the Commission for approval.

Item # 8

Request for Property Lease of Parking Lot in Santa Paula at 10th Street:

Staff presented a request forwarded to VCTC by the City of Santa Paula from Santa Paula Promenade Inc. to lease a parking lot near the railroad tracks at 10th Street. Staff recommends the lease be approved, pending review of the property ownership and comparable lease rates; the Committee approved the staff recommendation.

Item # 9

Schedule Future Meetings:

No immediate actions are anticipated in the near future. Therefore, the next meeting date was not set but will be called in the Fall when needed.

Item # 10.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5 PM.



Item # 7

November 16, 2011

MEMO TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCHLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM: MARY TRAVIS, MANAGER - TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT AND RAIL PROGRAMS

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF ANNEXATION REQUEST FROM CITY OF SANTA PAULA

RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve the request from the City of Santa Paula to annex two portions of the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) for the East Area Specific Plan Phase II project.

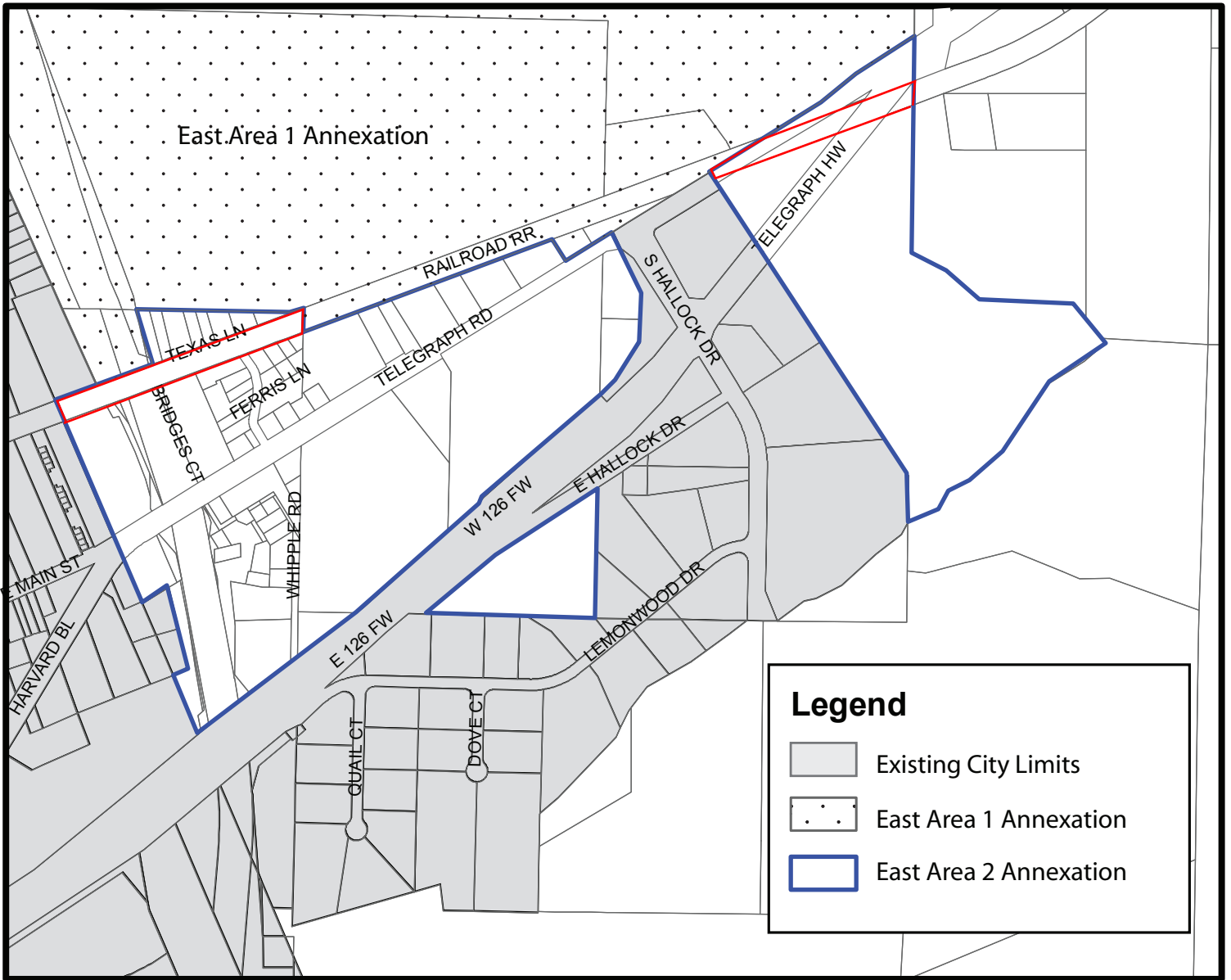
BACKGROUND:

The City of Santa Paula has requested VCTC consent to the annexation of two small portions of the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL). The portions of the SPBL under consideration are two short, linear pieces of the railroad right-of-way corridor, just north of Telegraph Road. One strip is between Grant Line Road and Ferris Drive, and the other strip is between South Hallock Drive and Peres Lane; please see attached location map.

The City is proposing to annex this property as part of its proposed East Area Specific Plan Phase II. Commission (LAFCO). Note that the proposed annexation will address a request from the Ventura County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) staff that the City annex properties in this area that would otherwise remain as unincorporated islands in the Specific Plan. These two strips are on either side of the strip of rail property approved by the Commission for annexation in September 2010 by the city for the East Area Specific Plan Phase I.

The City is proposing to zone these parcels Open Space Passive. This zoning was established by the City to accommodate land that is intended to remain undeveloped with permitted uses limited to waterways, flood control channels, utility corridors (such as rail operations), and hiking/biking/equestrian trails. It is not expected that any alterations to this property will occur that will change the existing maintenance and operation of the rail corridor. Also, the proposed annexation will NOT change the ownership of this portion of the SPBL.

Legal Counsel has reviewed the request. If SPLAC approves, this matter will then go to the Commission for its consideration at their December 2, 2011 meeting.





Item # 8

November 16, 2011

MEMO TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SPBLAC)

FROM: MARY TRAVIS, MANAGER OF TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT AND RAIL PROGRAMS

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION REQUIRED RAILROAD BRIDGES INVENTORY PHASE ONE PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and file update report on completion of Phase One of the requirements of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Final Rule on Railroad Bridge Inventory and Safety Inspections.

DISCUSSION:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has published its Final Rule requiring railroad track owners to adopt and follow specific procedures to protect the safety of their bridges and to strengthen federal oversight of railroad bridge maintenance programs. The rule is a requirement under the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008.

VCTC, as owner of the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) railroad, is subject to this requirement. There are 39 bridges along the SPBL of varying sizes between East Ventura and Piru.

The Final Rule requires track owners (or "Agency") to implement a rail bridge management program that has two phases. The first phase must be completed by September 13, 2012 and includes the following:

- Agency must inventory all railroad bridges owned by the Agency.
- Agency must maintain design documents for each railroad bridge.
- Agency must document all repairs, modifications, and inspection of railroad bridges subject to FRA review.
- Agency must establish a program to undertake at least annual inspections of all owned railroad bridges
- Agency must conduct special inspections if weather or other conditions warrant such inspections.
- Agency must develop and maintain a secure records management system.
- Agency must designate qualified, responsible persons to carry required tasks under the Final Rule.

At its March meeting, SPBLAC discussed the requirement and recommended to the Commission that consultant assistance be retained for the project. In June, the Commission approved issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to complete this required work.

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The RFP was posted on VCTC's website and the RFP was also mailed directly to six firms who had expressed interest in the project. Based on the prices submitted, and also, the past positive working experience with the firm, JL Patterson & Associates was awarded the contract. It should be noted that the firm is very familiar with the SBPL from its work on the 2007 SPBL Action Plan, and they have already started to collect the necessary information.

The schedule for the project is as follows:

October -November, 2011:	Update bridge inventory/obtain available as-built plans
December-January, 2012:	Write draft bridge management plan
February-March, 2012:	Prioritize bridge ratings
April-May, 2012:	Complete final bridge management plan
June-July, 2012:	Develop/secure records management plan
July, 2012:	Complete project/submit plan & inventory to FRA

Note that, after Phase One is completed for the SPBL and submitted to the FRA, VCTC will then begin Phase Two of the FRA inventory requirement. Phase II has to be completed within five years after Phase One is finished (or no later than September 13, 2018). In Phase Two, the Agency must schedule an evaluation for any bridges for which the load capacity has not already been determined as discovered in Phase One. This load capacity evaluation must be completed by a railroad bridge engineer in conformance with FRA regulations. After we have completed Phase I and have more information, staff will likely recommend placing this Phase Two work in the FY 2013/14 or FY 2014/15 VCTC budget.



Item # 9

November 16, 2011

MEMO TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SPBLAC)

FROM: DARREN KETTLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SPBL FREIGHT OPERATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

- Initiate actions to transfer common carrier service from Union Pacific (UP) to Fillmore & Western (F&W) Railway as permitted by the SPBL Shared Use Agreement between UP and VCTC.

DISCUSSION:

When VCTC purchased the SPBL from Southern Pacific (SP) Railroad in 1996, the Commission entered into a Shared Use Agreement with SP to allow continuation of existing freight service on the Line. The Agreement was transferred to Union Pacific (UP) Railroad when UP purchased SP. The agreement requires the Commission maintain the tracks between Montalvo and Santa Paula without charge as long as UP runs freight on the Line. Because VCTC contracts with F&W to manage the SPBL, when UP has freight to deliver, UP contacts F&W, and F&W then dispatches the train and controls the actual freight delivery.

For the past two years, staff has been working with UP to improve management of the freight operations on the SPBL. UP currently has one customer, International Paper, with deliveries/pickups by rail three times a week. VCTC, UP and F&W have been discussing establishment of a transloading arrangement, where the freight would be shifted from UP to F&W near Montalvo. In this type of arrangement, UP would pay F&W to transport freight to the UP customer i.e. International Paper. F&W could also market to provide other freight hauling opportunities to potential customers along the Line; this hasn't been a priority in the past because UP got all the revenue while VCTC shouldered all the costs.

While freight management on the SPBL is important to VCTC and F&W, it is not a high priority for UP and we have not been able to get them to focus attention on this issue. The operating agreement in place between VCTC and UP does allow VCTC to give a six-month notice to UP and the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) to transfer common carrier freight service. This should not be a problem because F&W is already fully qualified as a "common carrier" for rail operations and the movement of UP's freight will not be adversely impacted.

The change will require an amendment to the VCTC/UP Shared Use Agreement and approval by the STB. The current Shared Use Agreement does place the responsibility for damages to VCTC should UP incur damages brought about by the request to transfer common carrier service. As it is the intent of F&W to continue freight service to International Paper, general counsel believes the risk of damage is minimal.