



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

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2012
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 106 (Downstairs)
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 NOVEMBER 16, 2011 SPBLAC MEETING**

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. FRA REQUIRED SPBL RAIL BRIDGE INVENTORY PROJECT UPDATE

Recommended Action:

Receive initial report from FRA-required rail bridge inventory.

Responsible Staff: Mary Travis

8. FREIGHT OPERATIONS ON THE SPBL UPDATE

Recommended Action:

Discuss staff initiatives to improve freight operations on the SPBL, and, review current freight operations.

Responsible Staff: Darren Kettle

9. SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE FY 2012/2013 BUDGET

Recommended Action:

Approve the FY 2012/2013 Santa Paula Branch Line project budget for inclusion in the VCTC's annual FY 2012/2013 budget.

10. FUTURE MEETINGS

Recommended Action:

Approve suggested date of June 20, 2012 for next SPBLAC meeting.

Responsible Staff: Mary Travis

11. ADJOURNMENT



Item # 4

Summary of 11/16/11 SPBLAC Meeting

- Item # 1 **Call to Order:**
The meeting was called to order at the VCTC Conference Room at 3:30 PM by County Supervisor Kathy Long.
- Item # 2 **Roll Call:**
Attending the meeting in addition to Commissioner Long, were Commissioners Jamey Brooks (Fillmore), Ralph Fernandez (Santa Paula) and Bill Fulton (San Buenaventura). Also attending were Dave Wilkinson, Bill Bartels and AJ Farrar from Fillmore & Western Railway (F&W), Dave Fleisch and Kathy Connell from Ventura County Public Works Transportation, and VCTC staff Darren Kettle and Mary Travis.
- Item # 3 **Public Comments for items not on the agenda:**
There were no public comments.
- Item # 4 **Approval of 3/3/11 SPBLAC Meeting Summary:**
The meeting summary was approved.
- Item # 5 **Committee/Staff Report:**
There were no Committee or staff reports.
- Item # 6 **Additions/Changes to Agenda:**
There were no changes or additions to the agenda.
- Item # 7 **Santa Paula Request to Annex a Portion of the SBPL:**
After discussion and confirming that the annexed portion of the SPBL would still remain VCTC property, SPBLAC approved forwarding to the Commission the request from the City of Santa Paula to annex a portion of the Branch Line for the City's East Area Project Phase II.
- Item # 8 **Update on Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Bridge Inventory Project:**
Mary Travis 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; this phase must be completed in September 2014. After discussion, the Committee recommended the RFP be forwarded to the Commission for approval.
- Item # 9 **Update on Freight Operations on the SPBL:**
Darren Kettle summarized the staff initiatives to work with Union Pacific (UP) and F&W to transfer freight operations on the SPBL to F&W. The operating

agreement in place between UP and VCTC allows VCTC to give UP a six-month notice to UP and the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to transfer common carrier freight service, and staff recommends initiating action in that direction.

Item # 10

Schedule Future Meetings:

There are no immediate actions are anticipated in the near future. Therefore, the next meeting date was not set but will likely be called in April or May to review the final draft budget for next fiscal year.

Item # 11

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5 PM.



Item # 7

May 16, 2012

MEMO TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCHLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION (FRA) REQUIRED RAILROAD BRIDGE INVENTORY PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

- Review and discuss the initial results of the FRA-required railroad bridge inventory project.

BACKGROUND:

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 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/inspections of railroad bridges.
- Agency must establish an annual inspection program.
- 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 out FRA required tasks.

After Phase One is completed and submitted to the FRA, VCTC will then have to complete Phase Two of the FRA inventory requirement. Phase Two 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. As we plan on finishing Phase One this fiscal year, staff has included funding for the Phase Two work in the FY 2013/14 VCTC budget.

DISCUSSION:

In October 2011, JL Patterson & Associates was awarded the Phase One project contract, and they have been working on the project for the past several months, culminating with the actual bridge inspection.

In summary, it appears there are four bridges with structural flaws. Three of the four bridges have comparatively smaller problems but one of the bridges is bad enough that it had to be put out of service. This last noted bridge is over a barranca just east of Saticoy. When it was "red-tagged", it effectively halted any freight service along the SPBL until the bridge is repaired. Because this happened at the same time International Paper announced it was closing its Santa Paula facility, there hasn't been any problem by halting the freight deliveries so far. However, UP has four empty boxcars now captive on the east side of the impacted bridge, and at some point, these cars will have to be returned to UP.

The bridges with problems noted are:

1. Mile Post #408.60 (near Ellsworth Barranca just east of Saticoy)
6,022 foot ballast deck trestle needs both end abutment wood stringers replaced.
Estimated repair cost: \$75,000
2. Mile Post # 415.70 (near the Christmas tree farm at Hallock Drive just east of Santa Paula)
A small (15 foot) bridge over culvert needs repair to both abutment supports – estimated cost \$10,000 (note: repairs on this bridge have already been completed by F&W to allow their tourist trains to operate)
3. Mile Post # 416.90 (over Haun Creek east of Santa Paula)
45-foot ballast deck trestle bridge has been problematic during storms for several years and needs reinforcement. In addition, stringers on spans one and two on the left side and span three on the right side need to be replaced and bent two needs replacement with a posted pile bent on a concrete sill.
Estimated repair cost: \$45,000 - \$50,000
4. Mile Post # 420.22 (over unnamed barranca just west of Hall Road west of Fillmore)
Ballast deck trestle bridge needs abutment one cap replaced and span one on the right side stringers need replacement and the cross beams reinforced.
Estimated repair cost: \$25,000 - \$30,000

Dan Davis, Senior Project Manager, will be at the SPBLAC meeting to discuss his initial inventory results and provide information about the estimated repairs, and a more detailed description about the above-noted bridges will be emailed Monday afternoon. A full copy of the draft inventory plan recommendations will be available at the start of June, with the report going to the Commission at its July meeting.



Item # 8

May 16, 2012

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

FROM: DARREN KETTLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SPBL FREIGHT OPERATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

- Discuss actions initiated 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.
- Discuss potential impact of recent decision by International Paper (IP), the current sole freight customer on the SPBL, to cease operations in Santa Paula.

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 under Section 4 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.

Based on the direction of SPBLAC at the November 16, 2011 meeting, staff continued discussions with UP which culminated with a letter sent to them (Attachment # 1) exercising Section 4. We have not as yet received a written response from UP but the situation has become more complicated. Last month, International Paper announced they will be closing their Santa Paula facility on June 30, 2012. Since IP is currently the only freight customer on the SPBL, their action necessitates for further discussion about the viability of continued efforts to maintain the SPBL for potential other customers.



Item # 9

May 16, 2012

MEMO TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SPBLAC)
FROM: MARY TRAVIS, MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT AND RAIL PROGRAMS
SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR 2012/2013 (FY 12/13) SPBL BUDGET

RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve the FY 12/13 SPBL project budget for inclusion in the FY 12/13 VCTC annual budget including \$625,600 for administration, maintenance and operation of the SPBL.

DISCUSSION:

The final draft budget for the continued administration, maintenance and operation of the SPBL is attached. The total budget including staff and legal expenses totals \$625, 600 or an increase of \$12,900 over the total budget in FY 11/12.

Included in the draft budget is \$90,000 for completion of Phase Two of the FRA-required railroad bridge inventory; Phase Two will develop weight ratings to establish the load capacity of bridges.

TASK: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE – DRAFT FINAL

MANAGER: Mary Travis

OBJECTIVES: To protect and utilize the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL), which VCTC purchased from Southern Pacific/Union Pacific Railroad in 1997, for current and future public benefit by maintaining and operating the Branch Line rail corridor in a safe and efficient manner, while searching for additional opportunities to reduce costs and make the Line self-sustaining.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: VCTC contracted with Fillmore & Western Railway (F&W) to maintain thirty-two miles of SPBL track and railroad property between Montalvo and Rancho Camulos. Letters were sent to all leaseholders on the SPBL announcing review of property acreage and safety practices. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) required inventory of rail crossings/signals was completed. Also, after competitive bid, a contract was issued to JL Patterson & Associates to complete Phase 1 of the FRA required rail bridge inventory/maintenance plan; this project will be completed in late June.

DESCRIPTION: Continue ongoing maintenance of the Santa Paula Branch Line, ensuring that all rail facilities and related equipment are maintained to state and federal standards; maintain and preserve the rail corridor for potential future connection to the State High Speed Rail Corridor in Santa Clarita; provide opportunities for film making along the corridor; and, ensure continued maintenance and security efforts to be a good neighbor to those located along the Branch Line. Also, a Request for Proposals will be issued to complete of Phase 2 of the FRA required rail bridge inventory; Phase 2 involves calculating the load capacity of the rail bridges, and, implementation of the first year of the rail bridge maintenance plan.

Staff will continue efforts to make the SPBL self-sufficient, in particular, by assessing the existing leases for additional revenue, by working with F&W and Union Pacific Railroad (UP) to add more freight service, and by increasing movie revenue. However, while all these activities have potential, none of them can generate any significant additional revenue next fiscal year. The biggest income boost in the foreseeable future comes in 2015 when the gas line revenues will no longer have to be split with UP as required by the SPBL purchase agreement and an additional \$105,000 per year (in 2011 dollars) will accrue to the Branch Line.

Therefore, in order to keep the SPBL functioning in the upcoming year, as has happened in the past, the difference between the revenue generated on the Line and the annual expenditures will be made up through the use of State Transit Assistance (STA) funding.

WORK ELEMENTS:

1. Manage the day-to-day operation of the SPBL, consistent with requirements of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and, the Surface Transportation Board (STB).
2. Prepare Right-of-Entry (ROE) agreements required for encroachments into SPBL corridor right-of-ways (ROW) by other parties/agencies for construction, installation and/or maintenance of utilities, or activities requiring temporary SPBL access.

TASK: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE (continued)

MANAGER: Mary Travis

WORK ELEMENTS (continued):

3. Prepare and administer leases for use of SPBL corridor property.
4. Quickly respond to neighbor complaints; conduct weed abatement activities, including application of pre-emergent and weed killer sprays; and, trim and/or remove brush and trees to eliminate incursion of homeless on the rail ROW; and, conduct regular monthly operations and maintenance activities.
5. Continue working with appropriate agencies to reduce costs and increase revenues to make the SPBL self-sustaining.
6. Complete FRA-required bridge inventory and implement bridge maintenance plan.

PRODUCT: Continued safe and efficient management of the 32 mile-long SPBL.

FUNDING:

Funding Dollars	Funding Source
\$340,600	STA fund transfer
10,000	CPUC signal
266,000	Local fee - lease
5,000	Local fee - film revenue
4,000	Local fee - permits
\$625,600	Total Funding

EXPENDITURE COMPARISON:

	Fiscal Year 2010/2011 Actual	Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Budget*	Fiscal Year 2012/2013 Budget
Salaries	\$ 32,756	\$ 20,800	\$ 20,900
Fringe and Tax Allocation	11,795	8,900	8,900
Indirect Cost Allocation	17,860	13,400	13,900
Business Meals	0	0	100
Mileage	193	750	800
Consultant Services	114,883	105,000	90,000
Legal Services	10,450	5,000	10,000
Lease Operations	283,483	263,800	276,000
Maintenance	103,397	65,000	75,000
Signal Repair and Replacement	0	25,000	25,000
Track Work Improvements	45,473	0	0
Union Pacific Lease payments	102,599	105,000	105,000
Total Expenditures	\$722,889	\$612,650	\$625,600

*This budget task was amended after the Commission approved the budget in June 2011.