



TRANSFORMING TRANSPORTATION IN VENTURA COUNTY

VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE

MAY 10, 2013

Santa Paula Branch Line



Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) is 32 miles of rail right-of-way generally 100' wide but varies from 30' to as much as 250' totaling 388 acres with 29 miles of serviceable track.



Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) History

Originally constructed in 1887 by Southern Pacific Transportation Company (SP) as a means of connecting Santa Barbara to the Los Angeles & San Francisco main line.

As the coast mainline was completed in 1907 the SPBL was relegated to a feeder line. The SPBL carried passengers up to 1934 and freight slowly declined across the years.

In 1978 storm damage severed the line and an abandonment petition was approved removing approximately 16 miles of track from just west of Piru to Saugus. Title to the rail property outside of Ventura County reverted to multiple property owners although the corridor is largely preserved through the Newhall Ranch property.

By the early 1990s SP wished to abandon the remainder of the SPBL triggering interest by local jurisdictions to preserve the right-of-way for future rail use and use as a recreational trail.



Santa Paula Branch Line History

In 1993 Fillmore, San Buenaventura, Santa Paula, the County of Ventura and the VCTC submitted a joint application for Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) funds to purchase the rail right-of-way.

In 1995 VCTC purchased the SPBL and the Ventura Branch Line from SP for \$8.5 million.

Purchased with:

- ❖ Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) – \$4 million**
- ❖ Federal Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) - \$3.5 million**
- ❖ Local Match, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Ventura, County of Ventura - \$ 1 million**

The purchase of the SPBL included 388 acres of land, 29 miles of operating track, buildings and over 800 existing leases including inactive or expired leases as well as active leases for agriculture uses, longitudinal and transverse oil pipelines and other miscellaneous uses.



Santa Paula Branch Line History

The purpose of the SPBL purchase as stated in the TEA application was for use as a multimodal corridor including bicycling trails, hiking trails, freight, recreational parks, pipelines and utilities and possible commuter rail service.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES (not to exceed 60 words)

This project is the acquisition of the 32-mile-long Santa Paula Branch railroad right-of-way for use as a multimodal corridor serving five communities within Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. The corridor will be used for a bicycle and hiking trail; for freight port access, recreation, and possibly commuter rail service; for pipelines and utilities; for public parks, greenbelts and gateways to communities; for access to the Coastal Bicycle Trail and the De Anza National Historic Trail; and for access to the State High Speed Rail Corridor. The acquisition includes 388 acres of land, 29 miles of operating track, bridges, buildings and related improvements.

May 1993 TEA application



Santa Paula Branch Line MOU

**September
1995**

Memorandum of Understanding by and between, the VCTC, the County of Ventura, the City of Fillmore, the City of Fillmore Redevelopment Agency, The City of Santa Paula, The City of Santa Paula Redevelopment Agency, and the City of San Buenaventura.

- ❖ **Transferred title, rents, management, use and maintenance from SP to VCTC**
- ❖ **Excluded property transferred to the State for the widening of HWY 126**
- ❖ **Ventura Branch Line transferred with all titles and rents to the City of San Buenaventura**
- ❖ **Identified future conveyance of Saticoy Station and Piru Station and rental income from properties to the County of Ventura**
- ❖ **Identified long term lease with City of Santa Paula for the Santa Paula Station and rental income from that property**
- ❖ **Identified Santa Paula Branch Line Advisory Committee as the oversight body for all SPBL activities**
- ❖ **Required that a Master Plan be developed and adopted one year after the execution of the MOU**
- ❖ **Identified Revenue Sharing with SP (UP) for 20 years (2016)**



Santa Paula Branch Line Usage Agreement

**October
1995**

Usage Agreement – Santa Paula Branch Line between, the VCTC and the Southern Pacific Transportation Company. The Agreement detailed the maintenance responsibilities, cost allocation, liability allocation, notifications and other operational details.

- ❖ **SP retained freight rights**
- ❖ **SP responsible for maintenance**
- ❖ **VCTC and/or SP may discontinue, abandon or transfer freight rail service**

**January
1997**

First Amendment to Usage Agreement between, the VCTC and the Southern Pacific Transportation Company. The Amendment modified Section 2(b) of the original Usage Agreement shifting responsibility of all maintenance to VCTC. VCTC desired to upgrade the track beyond SP's need and SP only agreed to maintain track in the excepted condition at the time of the sale.



Santa Paula Branch Line Advisory Committee

- July 1995**
- VCTC amended its Administrative Code to incorporate the Santa Paula Branch Line Advisory Committee (SPBLAC) to provide recommendation to the Commission regarding management, maintenance, and use of the SPBL.**
- ❖ **Originally established to include city managers or their designees of each city on the corridor. With the expansion of the Commission to include representatives from all cities, the composition of the SPLAC was changed.**
 - ❖ **SPBLAC is now composed of Commissioners representing the cities and the County Supervisors whose District includes the Branch Line corridor.**
 - ❖ **Each member has one vote and a quorum consists of three members.**
 - ❖ **SPBLAC meets as necessary on the call of its Chair, the Executive Director of VCTC.**



Santa Paula Branch Line Planning History

January 1993	Ventura – Santa Clarita Rail Corridor Study	Identified operational and management issues surrounding potential ownership of the SPBL. Informed to decision to purchase the SPBL. Concluded that the SPBL could be used for continued or expanded rail service, a recreational trail and pipeline/telecommunications corridor.
July 1995	Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Review & Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Work Plan	Hazardous materials and remediation work plan.
December 1996	Santa Paula Branch Line Master Plan	Mandated by the 1995 MOU, the Plan established a framework of policies, procedures and standards to guide the management and operation of the Santa Paula Branch Line corridor. The goal of the Master Plan is to, “preserve the rail corridor right-of-way in a state that is compatible with future commuter rail service.”



Santa Paula Branch Line Planning History

November 1998	Ventura Rail Right-of-Way restoration Study	Sponsored by the City of Santa Clarita, examined the issues surrounding the restoration of the SPBL east of the Ventura County Line.
November 1999	“Santa Paula Branch Line Management and Capital Needs Assessment”	Provides capital needs assessment to bring SPBL up to Class III or Class IV standards. Estimates \$16 million for Class III, \$35 million Class IV and identifies need for \$800,000 investment for freight transfer infrastructure.
January 2000	Santa Paula Branch Line Recreational Trail and Associated EIR	Provided design guidelines, preliminary engineering and alignment recommendations for SPBL Recreational Trail. Environmental documentation for impacts and mitigations.



Santa Paula Branch Line Planning History

March 2007	Santa Paula Branch Line Corridor Study	Updates and continues the November 1999 Capital Study. Examines the potential for a phased reconnection and upgrade of the SPBL and provides new estimates to bring the line up to Class IV standards.
June 2012	Santa Paula Branch Line Bridge Inspection Report	Inventoried all bridges on the SPBL and identified structural deficiencies requiring repairs, prioritized repairs and provided cost estimates. A total of 22 bridges were identified as needing repair over the next five years, estimated at approximately \$700,000. Two bridges have been repaired to date.



Santa Paula Branch Line Operations

At the time of the purchase there were two rail operations that were planned for continuation. Union Pacific as SP's successor was providing freight service to businesses in Santa Paula until the last remaining regular freight customer, International Paper discontinued its Santa Paula Operations in June of 2012. The Fillmore & Western Railroad operating film and excursion trains has continued its operation to present day.

**July
2001**

VCTC entered into, two, 20 year lease agreements for rail operations.

- ❖ VCTC leased to Fillmore & Western, the track, track support structures, buildings, and property lying within 15 feet of centerline between Montalvo and Rancho Camulos. VCTC currently receives \$9,000 annually and 5% of filming revenues.**
- ❖ VCTC leased to Fillmore Redevelopment Agency (RDA) the track, track support structures, buildings, and real property lying within 15 feet of centerline between near 8th Street in Santa Paula and near Rancho Camulos.**

Fillmore RDA then entered into a sublease with Fillmore & Western for the purpose public/tourist excursions, charter and dinner train operations.



Santa Paula Branch Line Operations

Fillmore & Western leases property lying within 15' of centerline of the track for a total of 30', between milepost 405.31 (near Montalvo) and 435.07 (near Rancho Camulos) and is responsible for maintenance of the track and track support structures, as defined in the lease agreement, last amended in September of 2007.

In consideration of maintenance work provided, VCTC pays Fillmore & Western the lesser of \$312,000 or the combined revenue derived from leases and State grade crossing/signals funds. Fillmore & Western also provides maintenance, repair and construction services outside of the lease agreement at additional cost.

With the acquisition of the SPBL came a large number and variety of leases, some dating back to the late 1800's. Of the more than 800 leases, slightly less than 100 are active providing revenue to VCTC. Total projected lease revenue for Fiscal Year 2013/2014 is \$248,000 of which \$108,000 will go to Union Pacific (UP) according to the purchase agreement. Revenue sharing with UP ends in 2016.



Santa Paula Branch Line Revenues Fiscal Year 2011/2012

Revenues	Fiscal Year 2011/2012
Lease and Crossing/Signal Revenue	\$ 284,358.00
Fillmore & Western Lease	\$ 8,988.00 *
Film Revenue	\$ 5,981.01 *
Special Projects	-
Other revenue & interest	\$ 11,398.26 *
Total Revenues	\$ 310,725.27

*** Revenues not included in F&W or UP payment available for other SPBL expenses**



Santa Paula Branch Line Expenses Fiscal Year 2011/2012

Expenses	Fiscal Year 2011/2012
Fillmore and Western Expenses	
Monthly Maintenance	\$293,346.00
Other Fillmore & Western Expenses	\$140,571.93
Total Fillmore & Western Expenses	\$433,917.93
Other Expenses	
UPRR Lease Split	\$105,267.00
Other Expenses	\$110,522.99
Staff Expense	\$38,604.35
Total Other Expenses	\$254,394.34
Total Expenses	\$688,312.27



Santa Paula Branch Line Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Net Position

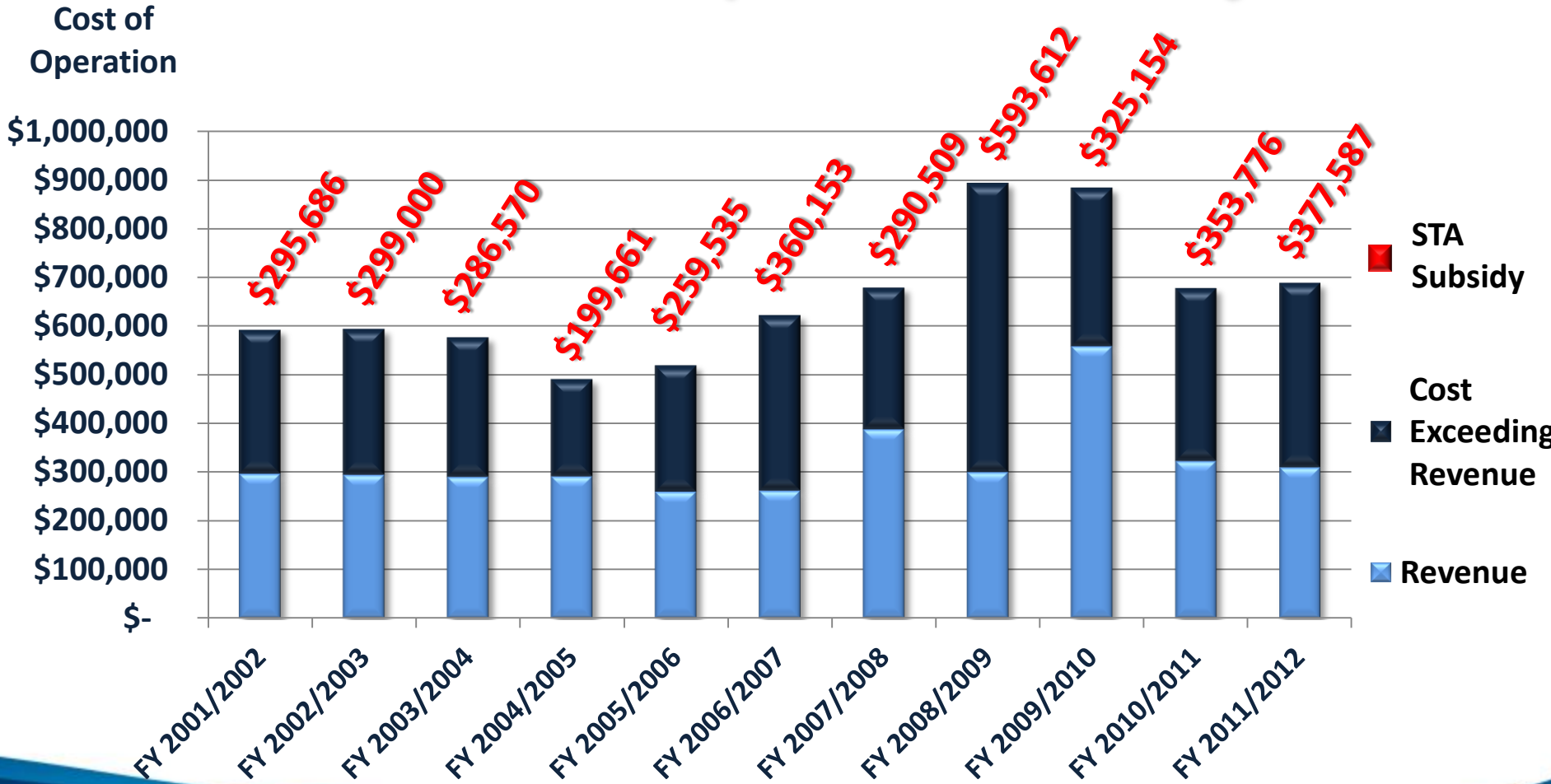
Fiscal Year 2011/2012	
Total Revenue	\$ 310,725.27
Total Expenses	\$ 688,312.27
Net Position*	\$ (377,587.00)

* Net negative position funded through the use of State Transit Assistance (STA) funds.



FY 2001/2002 – FY 2011/2012

Annual cost of operation and subsidy





Santa Paula Branch Line Net position over the past eleven fiscal years

Eleven Year SPBL Revenue/Expense History	
Total Revenue	\$ 3,576,466.53
Total Expenses	\$ 7,217,713.59
Net Position*	\$ (3,641,247.06)

* Net negative position funded through the use of State Transit Assistance (STA) funds.



Santa Paula Branch Line Advisory Committee

**April
2013**

SPBLAC met to review the 11 year history of operations on the SPBL and to receive a preliminary report from Egan Consulting on typical short line practices and agreements. SPBLAC's recommendation forwarded to the Commission was as follows:

Present to the full Commission the information presented to SPBLAC and reaffirm the long term support of the Santa Paula Branch Line with the short term goal of, at a minimum, making the Santa Paula Branch Line cost neutral and to bring a range of management alternatives to the Commission including the discontinuation of rail operations.



SPBL Management Alternatives

Any and all alternatives should include a review of all current agreements and leases.

Renegotiated Status Quo:

A continuation of the current asset management practices with all agreements and leases reevaluated. At a minimum, new leases need to be put in place given the dissolution of the Fillmore RDA and the \$700,000 bridge repair cost responsibility determination must be made.

Fillmore & Western Common Carriage:

Enable Fillmore & Western to pursue increasing freight opportunities. All required freight infrastructure improvements, all capital and maintenance costs to be borne by Fillmore & Western.

Limited Freight:

Continue Union Pacific as the freight carrier and maintain only that portion of the SPBL as needed for identified freight customers.

No Rail Operations:

Discontinue all rail operations and maintain the right-of-way for future rail and recreational use supported by the SPBL generated revenues.



QUESTIONS?



TRANSFORMING TRANSPORTATION IN VENTURA COUNTY

VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE

MAY 10, 2013