



Coachella Valley – San Geronimo Pass Rail Corridor Service

The Coachella Valley-San Geronio Pass Rail Corridor extends approximately 145 miles from Los Angeles Union Station to either the City of Indio or Coachella. The Riverside County Transportation Commission, in coordination with Caltrans and the Federal Railroad Administration, is working to bring passenger rail service to this needed area. The project proposes operating two daily roundtrip intercity passenger trains in each direction between Los Angeles and the Coachella Valley, with morning and evening departures from each endpoint. The passenger service is being planned with an approximate trip time of 3 hours 15 minutes and provides comparable trip times made by cars on congested highways such as Interstate 10 or Route 91.

In 2016, an Alternative Analysis identified a route from LA Union Station via Fullerton, Riverside and the San Geronio Pass to end in Indio or Coachella. Subsequently, RCTC began environmental studies with public scoping. The environmental analysis currently being conducted for this stage of the project is a Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR that meet federal and state requirements. This document is being prepared for anticipated public review in summer 2021. Future Tier 2/Project NEPA/CEQA documents will be prepared once location-specific engineering and design details are available.

Tier 1 of environmental analysis will evaluate the impacts of operating a daily service between Los Angeles and the Coachella Valley and will identify the types of impacts caused by constructing the infrastructure needed for the service to operate (primarily tracks and stations).

Specific station locations and precise track designs will not be identified at this stage of the project. Tier 1 of the project's environmental analysis will address broad questions and environmental effects of the overall project; however, it will not address location-specific details. Concurrently, a Service Development Plan is being finalized to provide a high-level conceptual operations plan. Modeling is being conducted so that passenger and freight rail operations can perform adequately. Infrastructure plans will limit right of way needs.

Upcoming Milestones	
Complete Administrative Draft EIR/EIS	Winter 2020/21
Notice of Availability / Notice of Completion	Spring 2021
Release of Draft EIR/EIS for Public Review	Spring/Summer 2021
Prepare Responses to Comments	Summer/Fall 2021
Record of Decision	December 2021

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Modeling “The Hill”

Passenger trains operating between Coachella and Los Angeles must cross mountainous terrain. The route through the mountains follows the San Gorgonio Pass, climbing at a 2% grade. Reducing the curving alignment and grade through the Pass is costly, impacts the area, and requires lower train speeds.

The project team used computerized modeling to estimate the running times of freight trains and passenger trains in both directions between the Coachella Valley and Colton. In both directions, the lighter weight passenger train had a simulated running time that was 1 hour and 9 minutes faster than the freight train, as shown below. Even on flatter terrain, passenger trains in the corridor have a higher authorized speed than freight trains. On flatter terrain, passenger trains are typically faster than freight trains. However, steep grades near Beaumont will cause the freight trains to travel more slowly than usual, creating congestion for passenger trains.

Infrastructure upgrades to increase track capacity will likely be required to accommodate freight trains and passenger trains traveling at different speeds through the corridor, while enabling the passenger trains to operate with comparable trip times and a high degree of reliability.

Corridor at a Glance

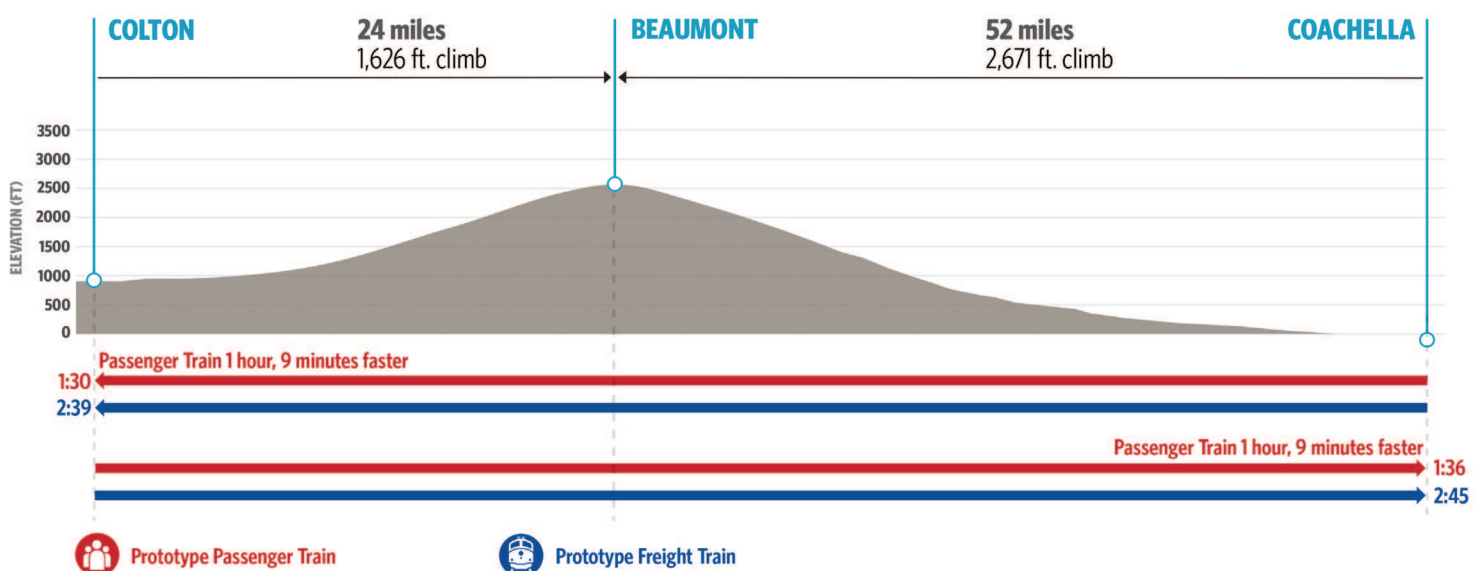
- **Eastern Endpoint** – City of Indio/Coachella in Riverside County
- **Western Endpoint** – Los Angeles Union Station
- Approximately 145-mile corridor, mostly parallel to Interstate 10 and Route 91
- Shared freight and passenger rail corridor
- New track and passenger rail station infrastructure will likely be needed in the eastern 76 miles of corridor between Coachella and Colton
- Amtrak provides existing intercity passenger rail service
- Private freight railroads own the property and tracks along the proposed route.
- Passenger access rights will need to be negotiated prior to the start of service.

Improvements Needed

As part of the project’s Service Development Plan, RCTC is conducting computer modeling to identify how to achieve the project’s service goals. To make passenger rail service possible in the corridor, the project team is evaluating the following improvements, most of which will occur within the existing right of way:

- Additional mainline track
- New passenger rail stations
- New and improved passing tracks, sidings, connecting tracks, and signals

The Hill Model



Contact Us

Please contact the Riverside County Transportation Commission to share your feedback.



951-787-7141



CVRail@rctc.org



CVRailProject



RCTC.org/cvrail