

**RIVERSIDE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

<b>DATE:</b>	June 24, 2019
<b>TO:</b>	Budget and Implementation Committee
<b>FROM:</b>	Cheryl Donahue, Public Affairs Manager
<b>THROUGH:</b>	Aaron Hake, External Affairs Director
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	#Reboot My Commute Public Engagement Program Summary

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is for the Committee to:

- 1) Receive and file an update about the Commission’s #RebootMyCommute public engagement program in Riverside County; and
- 2) Forward to the Commission for final action.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Commission launched its #RebootMyCommute public engagement program on March 6, 2019, to solicit feedback from residents about ways to improve mobility across Riverside County. The feedback will help inform long-term transportation priorities, including review of the Measure A expenditure plan, development of the 10-Year Western County Highway Delivery Plan, continued development of next generation toll projects, and completion of the Next Generation Rail Corridor Feasibility Study and Long Range Transportation Plan. Defining transportation priorities is critical for the Commission, which is facing a \$12.6 billion shortage between its anticipated transportation funding and needs during the next 20 years.

Compounding this funding gap are additional transportation challenges. Rapid population growth likely will continue in Riverside County, which has relatively lower housing costs and more open space than Orange, Los Angeles, and parts of San Diego Counties. Despite significant expected employment gains, Riverside County is forecast to retain a high jobs-to-housing imbalance, creating a large commuting population. Riverside County is also a growing hub for the logistics industry, which employs many residents yet also contributes to traffic congestion, air pollution, and other impacts.

Residents and motorists in Riverside County are expressing frustration with traffic congestion, experiencing construction fatigue, and voicing concerns about the need for equitable shares of transportation funding. The public and elected officials are seeking solutions to these issues.

The Commission created #RebootMyCommute to invite residents and commuters to provide feedback about how to create a better transportation system in Riverside County. The program offered opportunities for the public to tell their stories and to recommend how and where the Commission's limited transportation dollars should be spent. Using the theme, "We are Listening," #RebootMyCommute acknowledged the public's frustration with traffic, late trains, potholed streets, and how long it takes for improvements to happen. The Commission accepted comments from March 6 to June 3, a 90-day period. Multiple tools were available for residents and commuters to learn about #RebootMyCommute and share feedback:

- 1) RebootMyCommute.org website
- 2) Social media advertising with videos
- 3) Tele-townhall meetings
- 4) Community booths
- 5) News media
- 6) The Point subscriptions
- 7) Helpline
- 8) Presentations
- 9) Text messaging
- 10) Brochures and postcards

### **Comments, By The Numbers**

The following is a numerical summary of the metrics for #RebootMyCommute. Appendix A provides a graphic display of these metrics.

- 1) **Tele-Townhall Meetings:** The Commission hosted Tele-town Hall meetings on March 19 and 20. These attracted 7,539 participants, 52 phone discussions, and nine follow-up voice messages.
- 2) **Community Booths:** The Commission staffed booths at six community events throughout Riverside County and engaged with 559 residents at these events.
- 3) **News Media:** Ten news stories featured the "Reboot" program. Advertisements were placed in *The Press-Enterprise* and *The Desert Sun*, with a combined print ad circulation of 461,702 and digital ad circulation of 156,250. The video ad aired 16 times on television station KESQ. Commissioners and staff also took part in various video and podcast series.
- 4) **Website:** The RebootMyCommute.org website had 22,061 sessions with 19,556 unique visitors. The Commission received 473 comment forms via the site.
- 5) **The Point Subscriptions:** The Commission publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Point*, which the Commission emails to subscribers. As part of the #RebootMyCommute program, residents were encouraged to register to receive the newsletter; 1,315 new subscribers registered during the program.
- 6) **Text Messaging:** A text-messaging feature was available for those who wished to provide input via text. The Commission received 81 text messages. However, the texts received were limited to those who registered to receive *The Point*.

- 7) **Brochures and Postcards:** The Commission produced and distributed more than 5,500 brochures – printed in English and Spanish – to city halls, community centers, libraries, senior centers, transportation groups, chambers of commerce, and elected officials’ offices across Riverside County. The brochures also were available at community booths and presentations.
- 8) **Social Media:** The Commission placed a series of targeted social media ads with videos related to #RebootMyCommute.
  - a. On **Facebook**, 596,316 people viewed the videos in their entirety and 31,736 clicked to learn more. There were 2,098 direct engagements with viewers, 3,927,342 impressions, and a reach of 630,409.
  - b. On **Twitter**, there were 7,613 full video views, 1,989 click-throughs, 54 direct engagements, and 368,225 impressions.
  - c. On **Instagram**, 30,820 people watched the full video, and 4,448 clicked to learn more. There were 1,830 direct engagements, 2,898,023 impressions, and a reach of 629,129.
  - d. On **YouTube**, there were 803,978 full video views, 13,584 click-throughs, and 3,495,097 impressions.
- 9) **Helpline:** A toll-free helpline was available for those who preferred to express their views by telephone. The Commission received 56 calls through the helpline.
- 10) **Presentations:** The Commission made several presentations, including multiple chapters of Riverside Transit Agency’s Transportation Now, the Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce, the March Joint Powers Authority, the Temescal Valley Municipal Advisory Council, the Riverside Bike Club, the Riverside City Council, and the Norco City Council.

**Comments, Executive Summary**

The Commission received 948 comments through the website, social media and other sources. Staff sorted the comments into seven topics and seven geographical areas; summaries by topic and geography follow.

**Topics:**

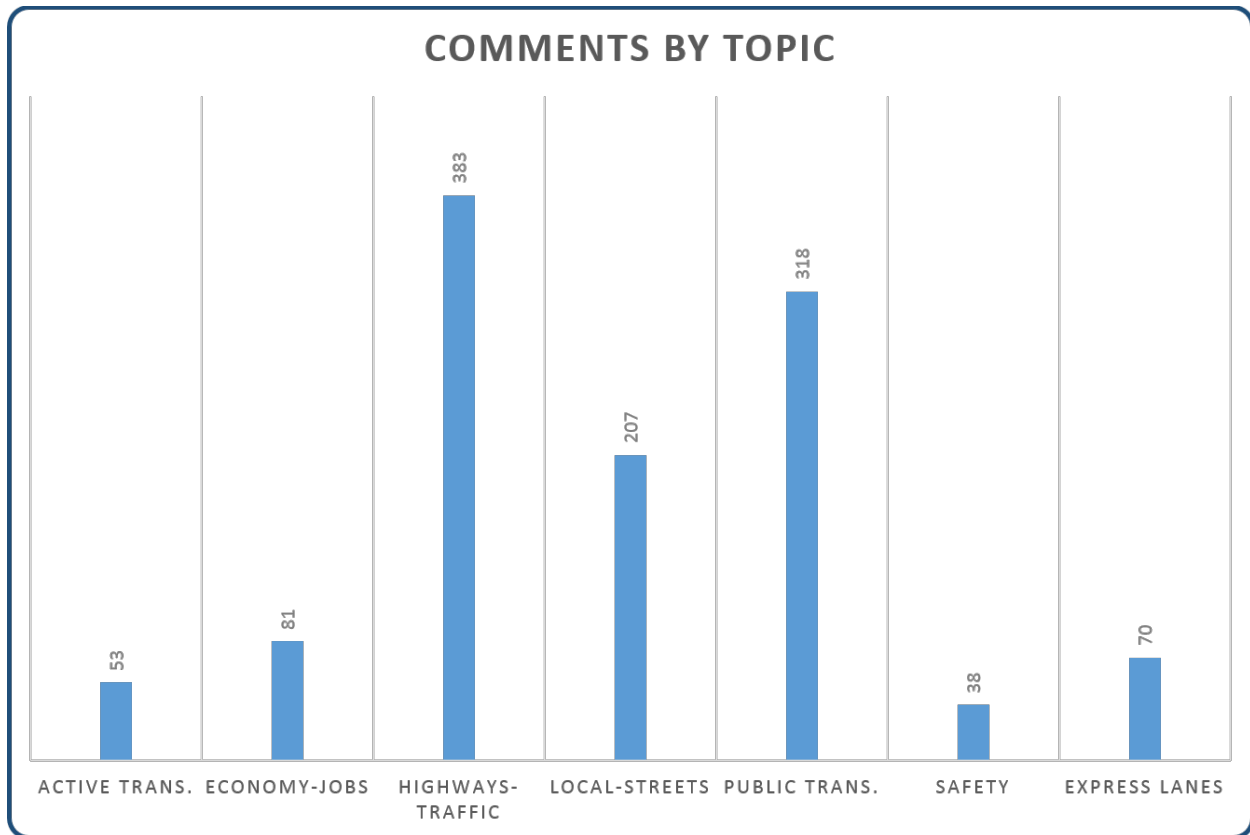
- 1) Active Transportation
- 2) Economy & Jobs
- 3) Highways & Traffic
- 4) Streets & Local Issues
- 5) Public Transportation
- 6) Safety
- 7) Express Lanes

**Geographical Area:**

- 1) Coachella Valley
- 2) Hemet-San Jacinto
- 3) I-215 Corridor
- 4) Northwestern Riverside County
- 5) Southwestern Riverside County
- 6) Riverside
- 7) San Geronio Pass

**Summary, Comments by Topic**

The chart below reflects the number of comments received about each topic. Since some comments addressed more than one topic, the table shows 1,113 comments. Following the chart is a summary of comments received by topic.



1. **Active Transportation – 53 Comments Received:** Most of these comments focused on the need to complete the Santa Ana River Trail between Riverside County and Orange County and the need to complete or make additional improvements to CV Link, the transportation route and recreational pathway in the Coachella Valley. The CV Link comments also suggested improving bike lanes and sidewalks approaching the trail or modifying the project to remove golf cart access. A number of comments noted the need for more bike lanes, walkable communities, sidewalk improvements, ADA signs for pedestrians, and motorized scooters.
  
2. **Economy & Jobs – 81 Comments Received:** Many comments noted the need to bring higher-paying jobs to Riverside County to reduce the need to commute to other counties, to offer incentives to businesses or employees who work from home, to provide more incentives for ridesharing, and to allow tax breaks for employers who hire local. A number of people were concerned about the high volume of residential and commercial development in Riverside County and the impact to traffic. Several voiced concerns about any possible new taxes and suggested that gas tax revenue should fund only freeway and roadway improvements.
  
3. **Highways & Traffic – 383 Comments Received:** The Commission received wide-ranging comments about increasing traffic congestion on highways throughout Riverside County. Frequently mentioned were the need to improve the State Route 91 corridor, including

the area between Green River Road and SR-241, the 71/91 interchange, 91 Express Lanes access, and the need for an alternate route between Riverside County and Orange County. A large number of residents voiced the need to widen and improve Interstate 15 between Riverside County and San Diego County, particularly near the 15/215 split. The number of comments increased greatly following an “I-15 Traffic Crisis” video posted on Facebook by the city of Temecula in mid-May. Other residents mentioned the need for traffic congestion relief along I-10 through the San Gorgonio Pass and the need for improvements to Highway 111 in the Coachella Valley. Residents also expressed concerns about increasing congestion along I-215 in Perris and Moreno Valley. Some motorists suggested removing express lanes, expanding carpool lanes, using reversible lanes, building double-decked highways, and limiting travel times for big-rig vehicles.

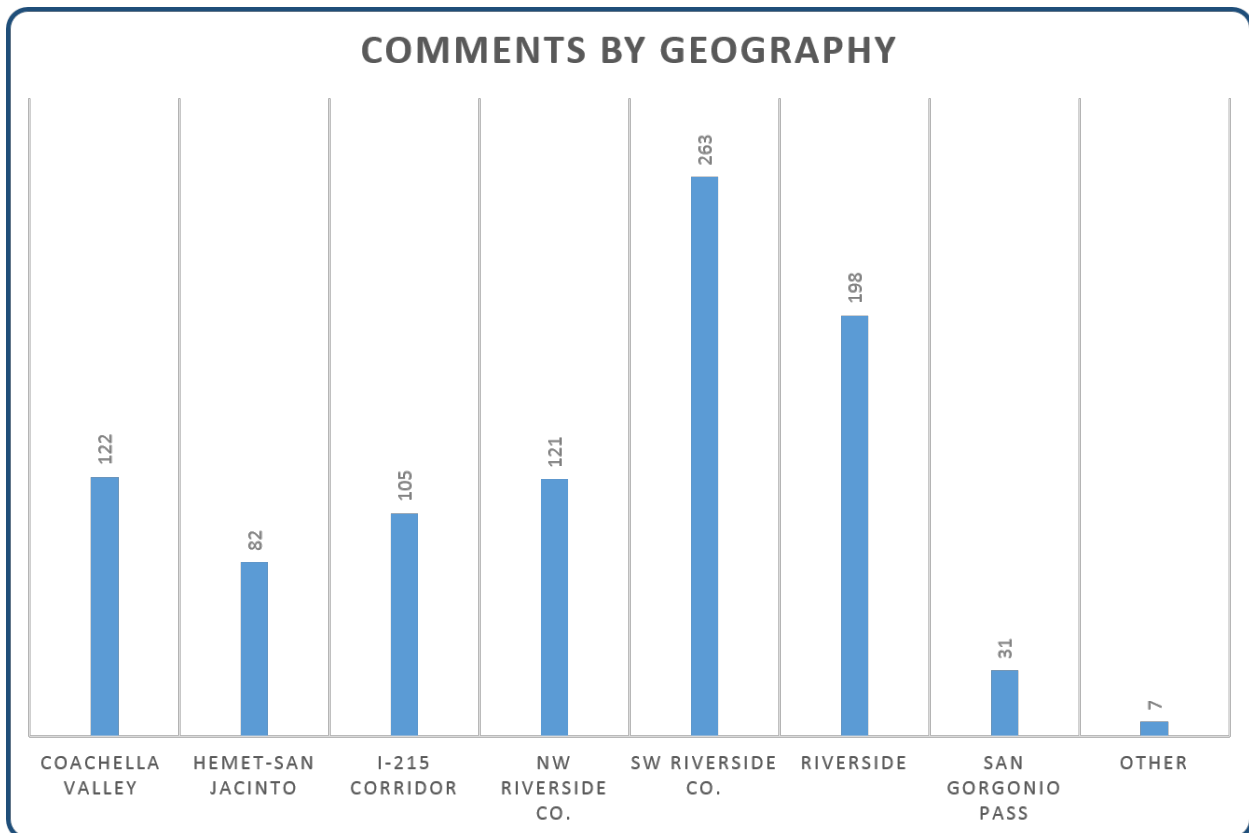
4. ***Streets & Local Issues – 207 Comments Received:*** Many comments in the category focused on the need to fix potholes, repave roads, improve timing and coordination of traffic signals, add left-turn phases to traffic signals, and add left-turn lanes. Other comments addressed the need for more sidewalks, the effectiveness of roundabouts, the need to install more stop signs, and the need for red-light cameras for traffic enforcement. A number of comments noted specific streets that require repair, widening, and extension.
5. ***Public Transportation & Specialized Services – 318 Comments Received:*** Comments centered on the need for more rail and bus options throughout Riverside County, although some comments noted that public transit is ineffective in southern California. Many comments supported establishing daily train service to and from the Coachella Valley, with requests for stations in various cities. A number of residents requested that the Commission provide Metrolink or a light rail service for southwestern Riverside County and into San Diego County, to the San Gorgonio Pass, and to the Hemet-San Jacinto area. Others noted the need for greater train frequency, free weekend rides for families, discounted train tickets, weekend service on the 91/Perris Valley Line (PVL), and extending the 91/PVL to San Bernardino. Residents asked for more bus options between the Coachella Valley and Riverside, greater bus frequency, 24-hour bus systems, more station amenities, improved bus stop safety, bus-only lanes, more compressed natural gas buses, and greater assistance for veterans, seniors, and riders with disabilities. Riders also voiced the need for better on-time performance for trains and buses and additional ridesharing/vanpooling incentives.
6. ***Safety – 38 Comments Received:*** Comments noted the need for more police presence on roadways with larger fines for texting and driving, more stop signs, diagonal parking spaces, buses to enhance safety during the Coachella festivals, Park & Ride Lot security, and the removal of homeless people from bus shelters. Other comments noted the need for improvements to the I-15/Railroad Canyon Road/Diamond Drive interchange, Alessandro Boulevard and Columbia Avenue and the need to reopen Pigeon Pass Road, San Timoteo Canyon Road, and connector between Watkins Drive and Poarch Road.

Residents also questioned the effectiveness of a planned raised median on Florida Avenue in Hemet.

- 7. Express Lanes – 70 Comments Received:** A significant number of comments suggested removing the 91 Express Lanes or stopping construction of new express lanes. Some suggested replacing the express lanes with general-purpose lanes, carpool lanes, or light rail system. Others noted the high cost of using the express lanes, accused the Commission of profiteering, questioned various design features of the 91 Express Lanes, expressed concerns about using taxpayer funds to pay for express lanes, and advocated for an additional lane on westbound 91 between Green River Road and SR-241. Additional comments noted the need to extend the 15 Express Lanes past Lake Elsinore, the lack of access to the 91 Express Lanes from mid-city Corona, improving the 71/91 Interchange, and adding highways below ground.

### **Summary, Comments by Geography**

The chart below includes the number of comments received from various geographical areas across Riverside County. Following the chart is a summary of comments received by area. Appendices B and C include maps of the comment origins by zip code for western and eastern Riverside County.



- 1. Coachella Valley – 122 Comments Received:** A significant number of comments focused on providing daily rail service to the Coachella Valley via Amtrak, Metrolink, or a light rail

system. Others suggested bus service improvements, such as zero emission buses, seamless public transit options, smart phone applications, and more bus stop amenities. Residents generally voiced support for the CV Link project, but a few questioned the need for the project. Some comments noted increasing highway traffic congestion and the need to improve I-10 and Highway 111. Residents also recommended widening or repaving specific roads, including Avenue 52, Dillon Road, Varner Road, Ramon Road, and others. In addition, residents suggested new sidewalks, bike lanes, lane restriping, more streetlights, and coordinated traffic signals.

- 2. *Hemet-San Jacinto – 82 Comments Received:*** Residents provided comments about the need for increased public transit options, including expansion of Metrolink to Hemet-San Jacinto, more frequent trains, weekend service on the 91/PVL, train service to San Diego, a dedicated lane for buses, enhanced bus stop safety, and reinstating RTA's CommuterLink Bus 212. Other recommendations included coordinating traffic signals, repairing potholes, repainting lane markings, repaving SR-74, and not building a raised median on Florida Avenue in Hemet. Residents also suggested extending Ethanac Road, realigning SR-79, adding lanes to I-215, removing express lanes and carpool lanes, double-decking highways, improving SR-60 and I-215 near Moreno Valley, and building tunnels between Riverside County and Orange County and between Mt. San Jacinto and Palm Springs.
- 3. *I-215 Corridor – 105 Comments Received:*** Comments from residents along this corridor focused on lengthy commutes and the need to improve highway traffic congestion on both I-215 and I-15. Residents suggested improving the 15/215 interchange, redesigning existing interchanges, expanding express lanes south to Temecula, installing reversible lanes, and adding carpool lanes. Residents also suggested building the I-215 North Project to add lanes between Nuevo Road and SR-60, improving SR-60 and I-215 through Perris and Moreno Valley, limiting truck travel times on highways, and building more frontage roads or back roads to bypass highway traffic. Comments also included the need to expand Metrolink passenger rail or light rail south of Perris, providing weekend service on the 91/PVL, and establishing a dedicated set of tracks to avoid conflicts with freight service. Residents further noted the need for on-time buses, more accessible bus service for students, and more incentives to take public transportation. Further, residents recommended repairing potholes, coordinating traffic signals, installing traffic light cameras, completing the Santa Ana River Trail, extending Van Buren Boulevard to Harley Knox Road, reopening Pigeon Pass Road, adding traffic signals at San Timoteo Canyon Road, and reopening the connector at Watkins Drive and Poarch Road.
- 4. *Northwestern Riverside County – 121 Comments Received:*** Residents expressed a variety of concerns and suggestions, including halting construction of new homes, attracting more high-paying jobs to the area, and offering incentives for telecommuting, four-day work weeks, and flexible work schedules. Others cited the need to complete the Santa Ana River Trail, expand rail and bus options to Orange County, establish mandatory busing

to schools to reduce parent drop-offs and pick-ups, create a light rail/street car/feeder bus system to enhance Metrolink ridership, and develop a Corona trolley. A number of residents suggested removing the 91 Express Lanes and voiced concerns about the lack of access from mid-city Corona, traffic delays at the 91 Express Lanes entrances, carpool lane policies, and various express lanes design features. Along the I-15 corridor, commuters recommended additional widening within the median, extending express lanes past Lake Elsinore, improving the El Cerrito interchange, and widening Temescal Canyon Road. A number of comments noted the need to create an alternate route or frontage road along SR-91 to connect with Gypsum Canyon Road, limit truck travel times, and repair potholes. Others noted the need for improvements to the 71/91 interchange and 15/91 interchange, new lanes on westbound and eastbound SR-91, and better access to SR-241 from SR-91.

5. ***Southwestern Riverside County – 263 Comments Received:*** A significant number of residents voiced the need for improvements to I-15 in the Temecula area, with most of the comments following the “I-15 Traffic Crisis” video produced by the city of Temecula. Motorists noted lengthy traffic delays to and from San Diego County and expressed quality of life concerns. Suggested solutions included rebuilding the 15/215 interchange, widening I-15 (express lanes, carpool lanes, general-purpose lanes, bypass lanes, reversible lanes), making various design changes to interchanges, and building an interchange at French Valley Parkway. Others recommended expanding Metrolink or providing a light rail service in southwestern Riverside County and connecting with rail service in San Diego County. Some noted the need to bring more high-paying jobs to Riverside County, stop new home construction, limit travel times of trucks, expand bus service operations, create a transit hub in the “triangle area,” and build better bike paths.
  
6. ***Riverside – 198 Comments Received:*** A number of residents noted the need to improve traffic congestion on the SR-91 corridor by removing express lanes, changing express lanes to carpool lanes, removing carpool lanes, installing reversible lanes, rebuilding the 15/91 interchange, building bridges over the Santa Ana River, and creating another east-west route between Riverside County and Orange County. Some suggested double-decking freeways, improving the merge from SR-241 to eastbound SR-91, fixing the bottleneck and improving pavement at the 60/215 interchange, and limiting truck travel times. Others commented on rail and transit services, including suggestions to eliminate Metrolink altogether, expand train service hours, integrate transit systems, create a light rail or trolley system, offer more late-night service, make service adjustments to RTA’s CommuterLink Route 200, reduce fares, add a Metrolink station at UC Riverside, improve on-time performance of public transit, and develop a high-speed rail system. Residents also asked for completion of the Santa Ana River Trail, more bike lanes, coordinated traffic signals, sidewalk repairs, removal of scooters left on sidewalks, and repaving of various roads.

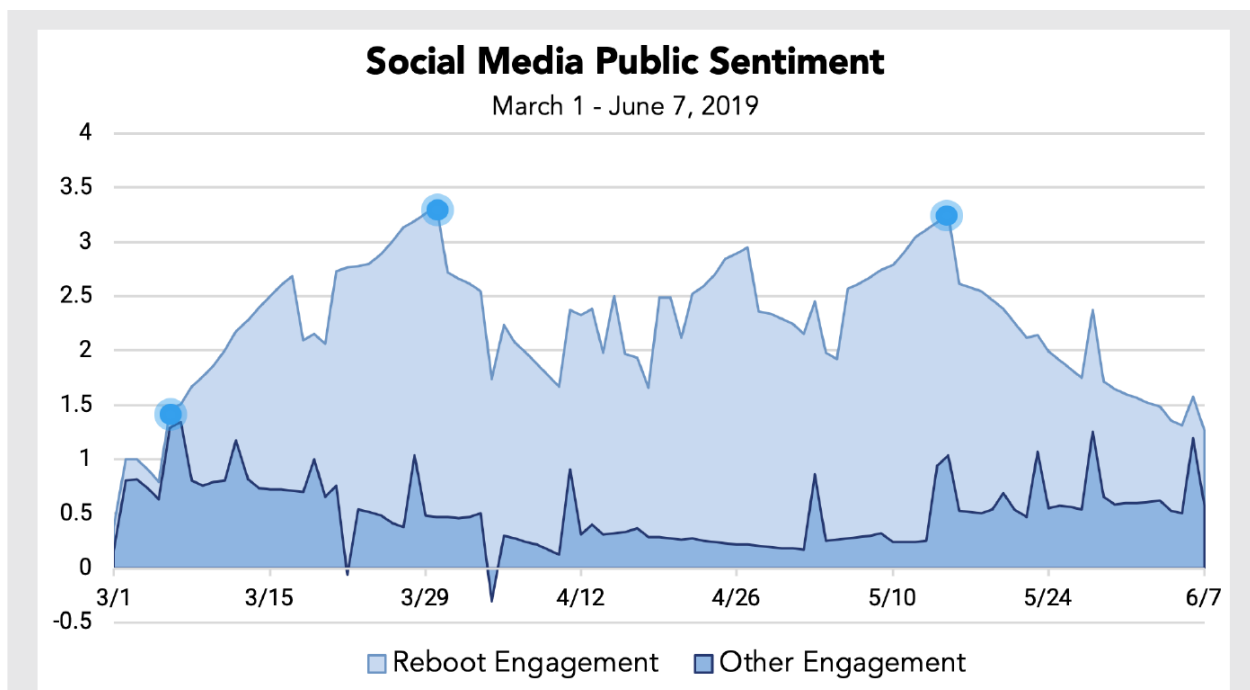


7. **San Geronio Pass – 31 Comments Received:** Multiple residents voiced the need for a rail system via Amtrak or Metrolink. Others requested bus service improvements, such as dedicated bus lanes, more transit options to and from Riverside, better on-time performance, more stops in residential, medical and commercial areas, and privatizing rail and buses to remove government influence. Residents further noted growing traffic congestion on I-10 and the need for new lanes and improvements to multiple interchanges from Calimesa to Cabazon, including Pennsylvania Avenue, Potrero Road, Oak Valley Parkway, Highland Springs, Singleton Avenue, Calimesa Boulevard, and County Line Road. Several people suggested upgrades to SR-79 between Beaumont and the Hemet-San Jacinto area, placing traffic signals on San Timoteo Canyon Road, and coordinating traffic signals.

The Commission received seven additional comments that staff could not identify by geography. Those comments covered a variety of topics, including creating efficient public transit, bringing more jobs to Riverside County to equal the volume of housing, completing the Santa Ana River Trail, and encouraging ridesharing.

**Conclusion**

Commission staff is pleased with the volume and variety of feedback received, as well as the overall constructive nature of the comments. The public understands where transportation investment is needed and is willing to recommend potential solutions. Staff considers the #RebootMyCommute program to be a success, due not only to this feedback, but also because the program demonstrated that the Commission is listening to residents, which in turn improves rapport with the public. The chart below shows the Commission’s public sentiment profile via social media during the 90-day program; the program helped boost public perceptions of the Commission.



The Commission will use this information to help guide the next steps for future funding initiatives. Commissioners are encouraged to share local issues with their staff and constituents. Commission staff also will provide feedback to Metrolink, bus transit operators, and local jurisdictions, based on the comments received from residents. Appendix D includes a listing all of the comments received, sorted by geographical area.

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** Graphic Display, Program Metrics

**Appendix B:** Comment Origins by Zip Code, Western Riverside County

**Appendix C:** Comment Origins by Zip Code, Eastern Riverside County

**Appendix D:** Listing of all comments received

**Community Outreach**

Tele-town Halls					
Participants	7,539	Comments	52	Voice Messages	9
Community Booths					
Events	6	Event Attendance	3,529	People Engaged	559

**Media**

Publications					
Media Stories	10	Print Ad Circulation	461,702	Digital Ad Circulation	156,250

Television			
Video Ad Airs	16		

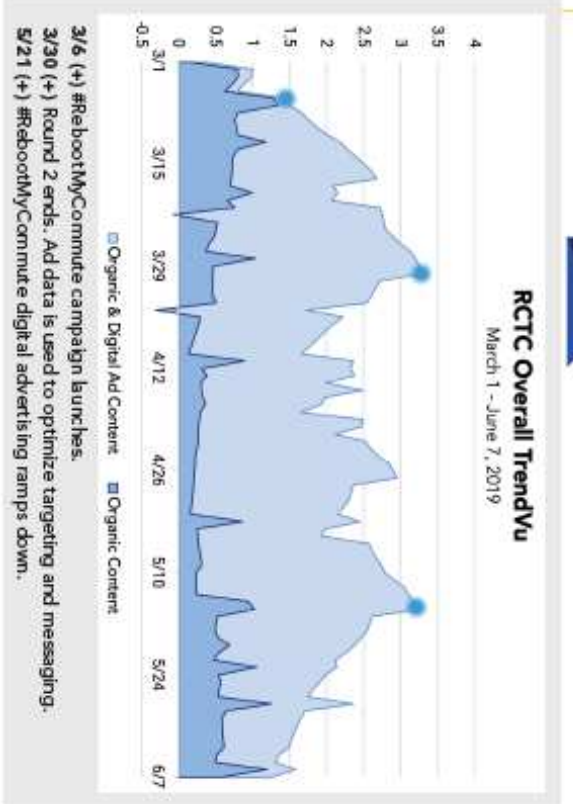
**Website**

Number of Sessions	22,061	Number of Unique Users	19,556	Form Submissions	473
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**Messages**

Email	
Subscribers	1,315
Text	
Subscribers	81
Print Piece Delivered	
	5,205

**Online Sentiment**



**Social Media Ads**

**Facebook**

- Video Views (100%) 596,316
- Clicks 31,736
- Direct Engagements 2,098
- Impressions 3,927,342
- Reach 630,409

**Twitter**

- Video Views (100%) 7,613
- Clicks 1,989
- Direct Engagements 54
- Impressions 368,225

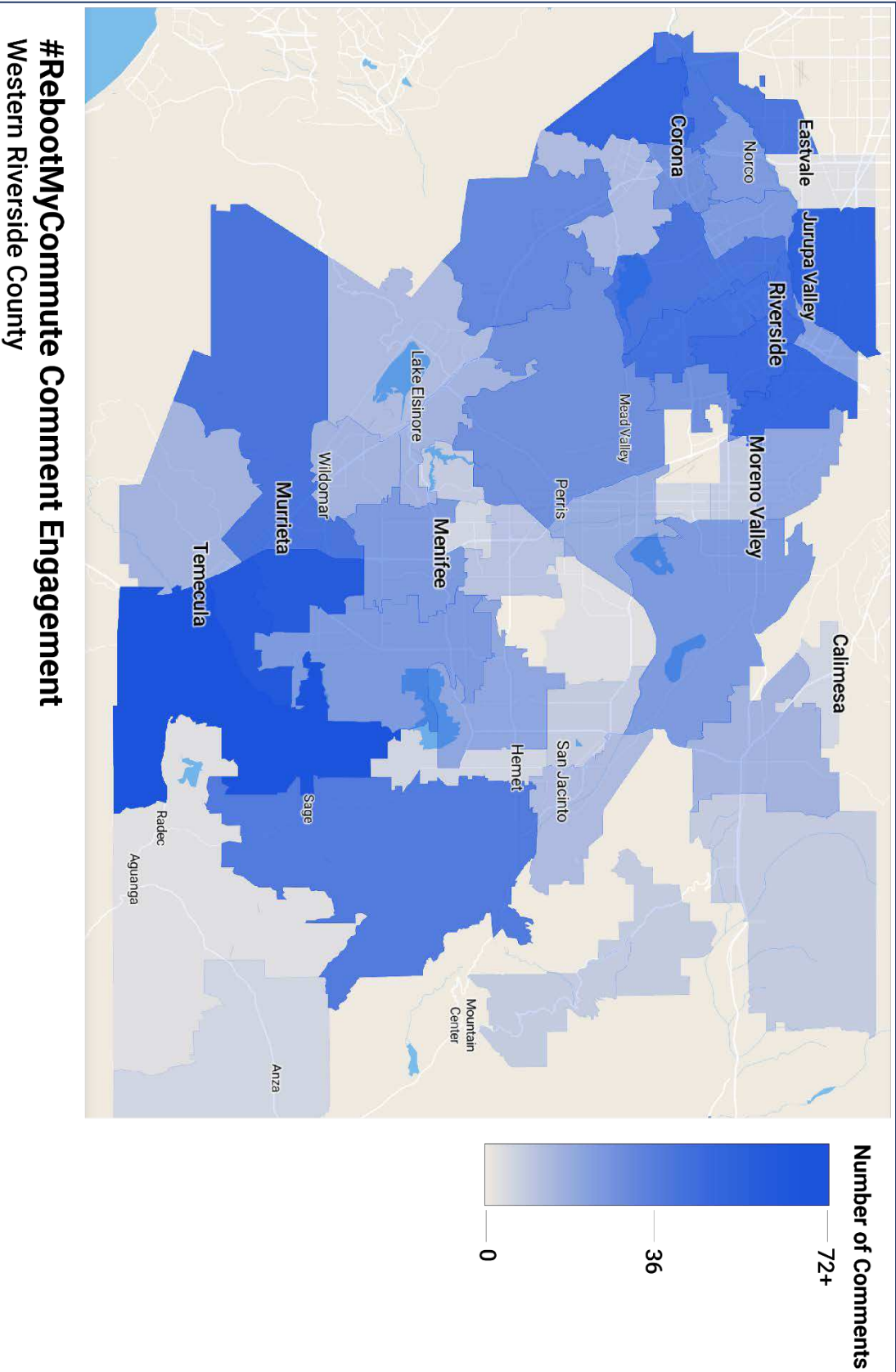
**Instagram**

- Video Views (100%) 30,820
- Clicks 4,448
- Direct Engagements 1,830
- Impressions 2,898,023
- Reach 629,129

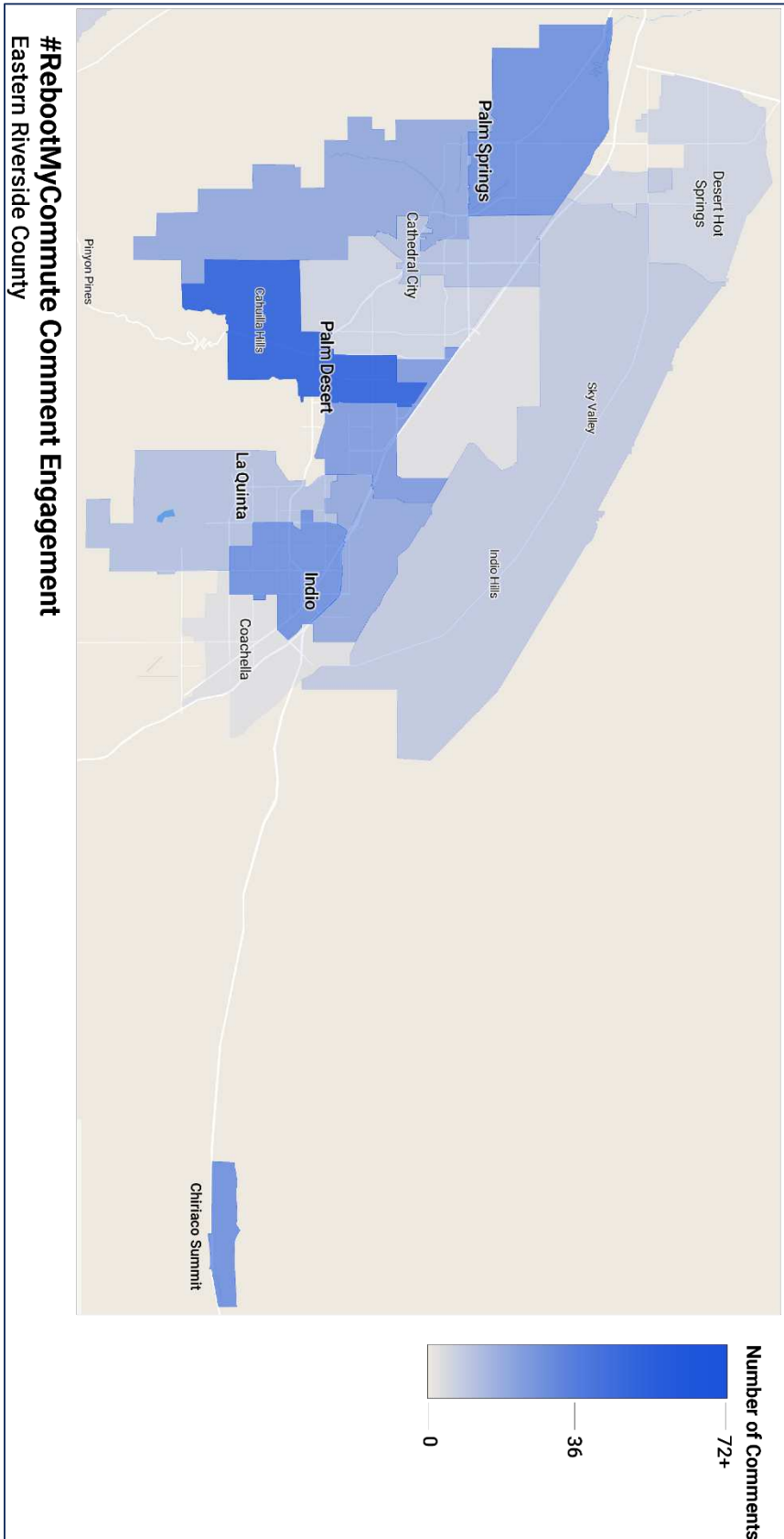
**YouTube**

- Video Views (100%) 803,978
- Clicks 13,584
- Impressions 3,495,097

# APPENDIX B



# APPENDIX C



Attachment: Appendix D – All Comments Sorted by Geographical Area (Enclosed on CD)