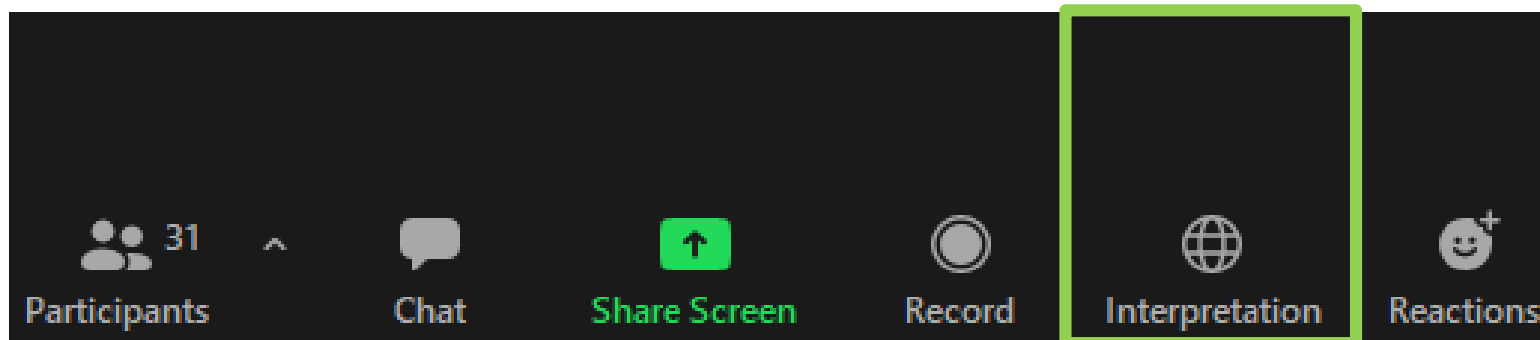*Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service*

Public Hearing

June 22, 2021

Interpretation Assistance

Para oír la presentación en español, haga clic en el botón de traducción de Zoom en la parte inferior de la pantalla.

Introductions

- Amanda Ciampolillo – Federal Railroad Administration

- Sheldon Peterson – Riverside County Transportation Commission

- JD Douglas – HDR

Program Video

Presentation Agenda

- Overview

- Purpose and Need

- Program History

- Prior Planning Activities

- Alternatives Considered

- Document Availability and Opportunity to Comment

- Q&A

- Public Comment Period

COACHELLA VALLEY–
SAN GORGONIO PASS
RAIL CORRIDOR SERVICE

Program Environmental Document
and Service Development Plan

Overview

Today's focus is the Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service Tier 1 Program Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report and potential environmental impacts identified. This meeting will provide you the opportunity to comment on the draft environmental document.

While commenting, participants are encouraged to:

- Explain the basis for their comments,

- Submit data or references offering facts, reasonable assumptions based on facts, or expert opinion supported by facts, and

- Submit the name of a contact person who will be available for later consultation, if necessary.

Overview

What is the Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service Program?

- The Federal Railroad Administration, the California Department of Transportation, and the Riverside County Transportation Commission are studying a 144-mile passenger rail service corridor between Los Angeles and the Coachella Valley

- Service would extend from Los Angeles Union Station to Indio or Coachella
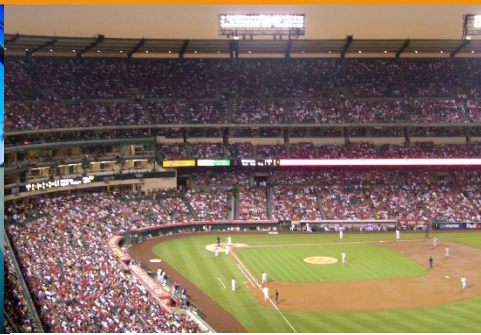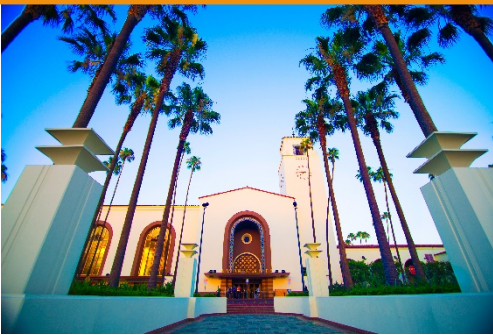
Program Overview – Study Area

Where is the Program Study Area?

Proposed Coachella Valley – San Gorgonio Rail Service

Passenger Rail Service Studied

Two round trips per day between Los Angeles and Coachella Valley

Up to six potential stations east of Colton

Purpose & Need

Purpose: Provide safe, reliable, and convenient intercity passenger rail service with capability to meet future mobility needs of residents, businesses, and visitors

Need:

- Regional population and employment growth

- Limited and constrained travel options

- Serve disadvantaged communities

- Help conform to air quality regulations

Program Purpose – Service Objectives

What objectives would the service achieve?

- More convenient, faster, frequent service than existing transit

- An alternative to driving that offers reliable schedules

- An affordable transportation service

- Improve regional travel options for transit-dependent people

- Serve expected growth within the program corridor

- Help conform to air quality regulations

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Why Amtrak Intercity Service and not Metrolink?

- Intercity service with over 3 hours travel time is preferred to have larger, reclining seats and access to the lounge car.

- Early Draft Schedules (limited stops)

LAUS to Indio	Trip 1	Trip 2
LAUS	10:20 AM	3:20 PM
Fullerton	10:55 AM	3:55 PM
Riverside	11:39 AM	4:39 PM
Palm Springs	12:59 PM	5:59 PM
Indio	1:23 PM	6:23 PM

Indio to LAUS	Trip 1	Trip 2
Indio	9:32 AM	3:32 PM
Palm Springs	9:59 AM	3:59 PM
Riverside	11:22 AM	5:22 PM
Fullerton	12:06 PM	6:06 PM
Los Angeles	12:40 PM	6:40 PM

- Congress has authorized Amtrak to operate on private railroads, with some track improvements. Metrolink does not have that authorization.

- Intercity service is funded by the state agencies not local funds.

Program History & Prior Planning Activities

1991 — Initial Feasibility Studies: Evaluated one or two daily long-distance rail round-trips between Los Angeles and Indio

2010-2013 — Additional Feasibility Studies

2013-2016 — Market Assessment/Alternatives Analysis: Evaluated five alternatives to determine the preferred alignment
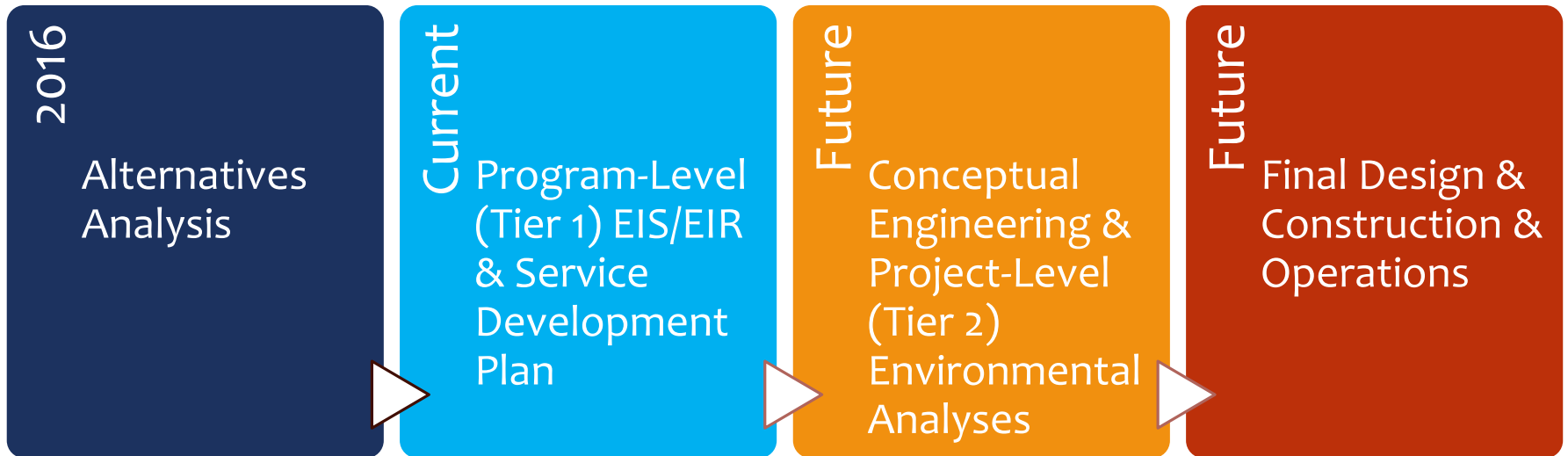
July 2016 — Finalized Alternatives Analysis/Preferred Route Advances for Environmental Studies

Fall 2016 – Summer 2021 — Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR: Held public scoping meetings and completed studies for Draft EIS/EIR for public review

Project Process

Where are we in the process?

2016	Current	Future	Future
Alternatives Analysis	Program-Level (Tier 1) EIS/EIR & Service Development Plan	Conceptual Engineering & Project-Level (Tier 2) Environmental Analyses	Final Design & Construction & Operations

Project Process

What will be prepared?

- Service Development Plan (SDP)

  - Analysis of service levels, infrastructure needs, route modeling, station catchment areas, and connectivity

- Program-Level (Tier 1) EIS/EIR

  - Joint National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/ California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process

  - Addresses likely environmental effects associated with type of rail service proposed in corridor

  - Provides basis for subsequent phases or tiered environmental documents (Tier 2 Project Level)

Project Process

- **Tier 1 Program-level** process will satisfy **both federal and state environmental requirements** (EIS + EIR) **WE ARE HERE**

  - ✓ Evaluates effects of implementing service (regional context)
  - ✓ Identifies broad areas of potential environmental effects associated with program construction and operation and the resources that could be potentially affected in the study area.
  - ✓ Procedural planning document only (i.e., not associated with any project construction)

- **Tier 2 Project-level** environmental process for infrastructure improvements to <u>follow</u> program-level EIS/EIR

  - ✓ Tier 2 would analyze site-specific impacts based on the infrastructure improvements identified in the SDP
  - ✓ Once approved, next steps (e.g., construction permitting, etc.) can commence

Project Process

The Program-Level (Tier 1) Draft EIS/EIR evaluates topics, including:

- ✓ Land Use and Planning
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Visual Quality and Aesthetics
- ✓ Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- ✓ Noise and Vibration
- ✓ Jurisdictional Waters and Wetland Resources
- ✓ Biological Resources
- ✓ Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Quality
- ✓ Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Paleontological Resources

Project Process

Topics, continued:

- ✓ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- ✓ Public Utilities and Energy
- ✓ Cultural Resources
- ✓ Parklands and Community Services
- ✓ Safety and Security
- ✓ Socioeconomics and Communities Affected
- ✓ Cumulative Effects
- ✓ Environmental Justice Effects
- ✓ Section 4(f)/6(f) Resources
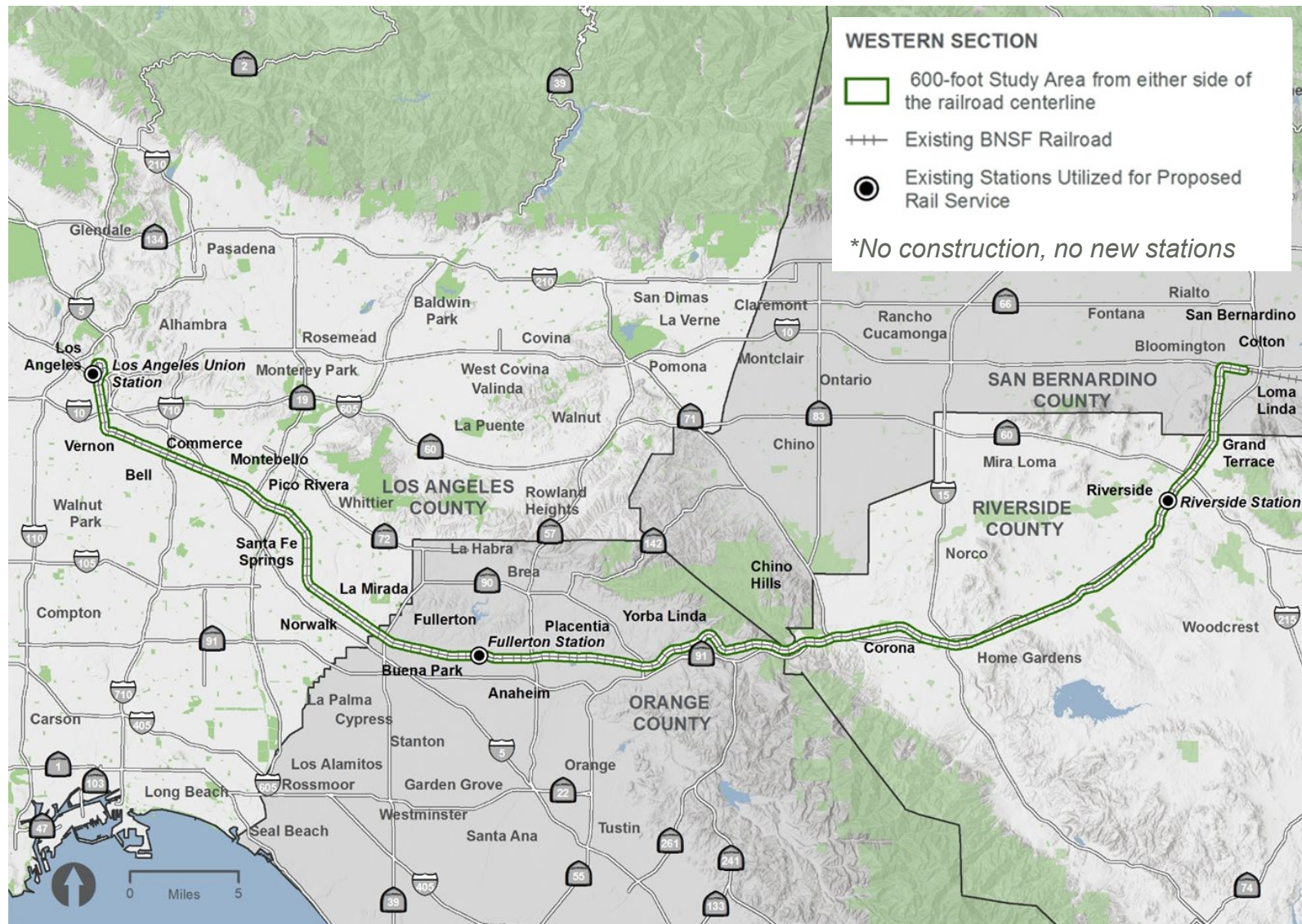
Alternatives Considered

The Program-Level (Tier 1) Draft EIS/EIR includes the analysis of:

	Daily Train Trips	Eastern Terminus	# of Stations East of Colton	New Third Track in Eastern Section
No Build	None	N/A	0	N/A
Option #1	Two round trips	Coachella	6	Colton to Coachella
Option #2	Two round trips	Indio	5	Colton to Indio
Option #3	Two round trips	Indio	5	Colton to approx. Mid Valley

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Western Section

WESTERN SECTION

☐ 600-foot Study Area from either side of the railroad centerline

+++ Existing BNSF Railroad

◉ Existing Stations Utilized for Proposed Rail Service
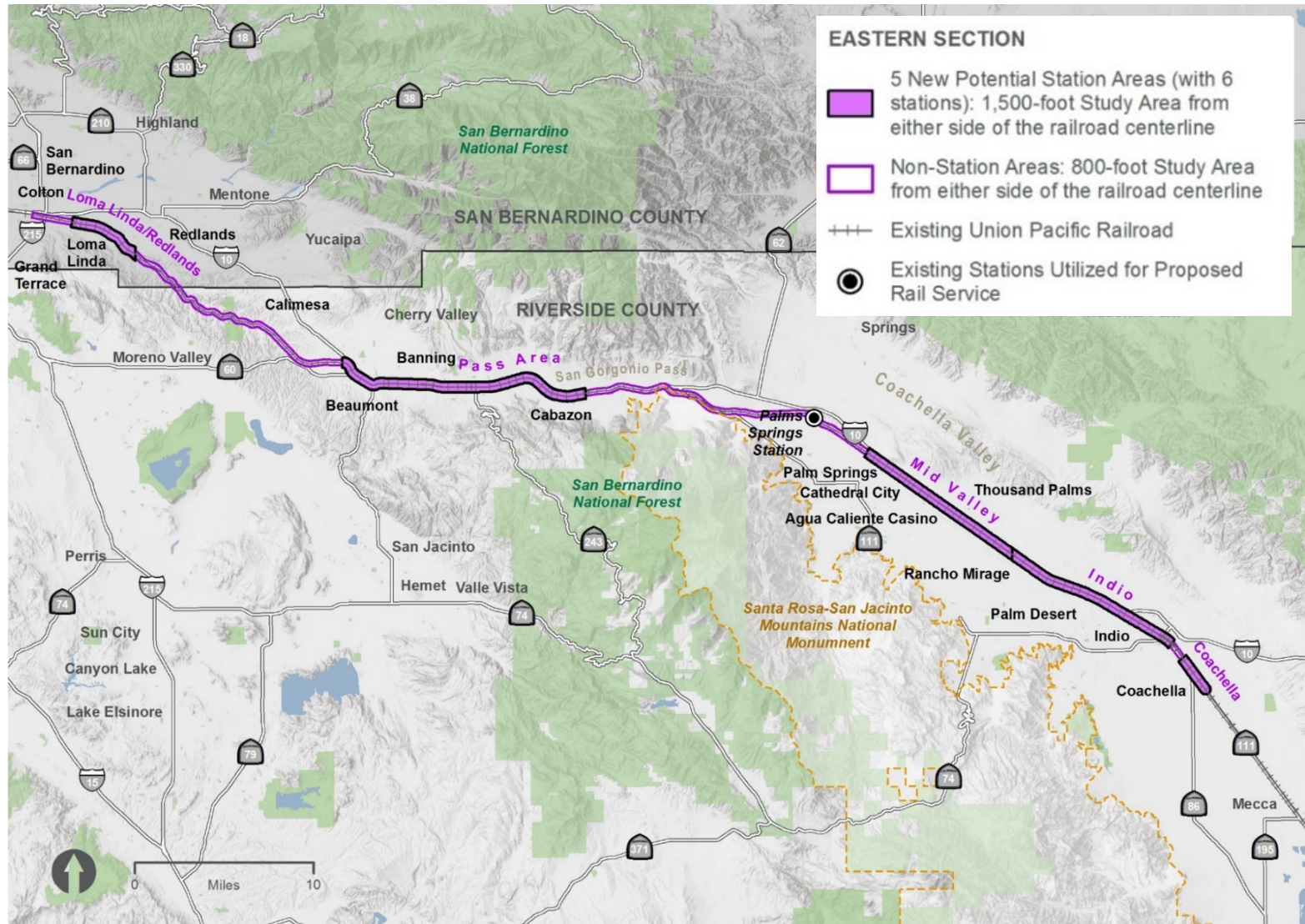
No construction, no new stations
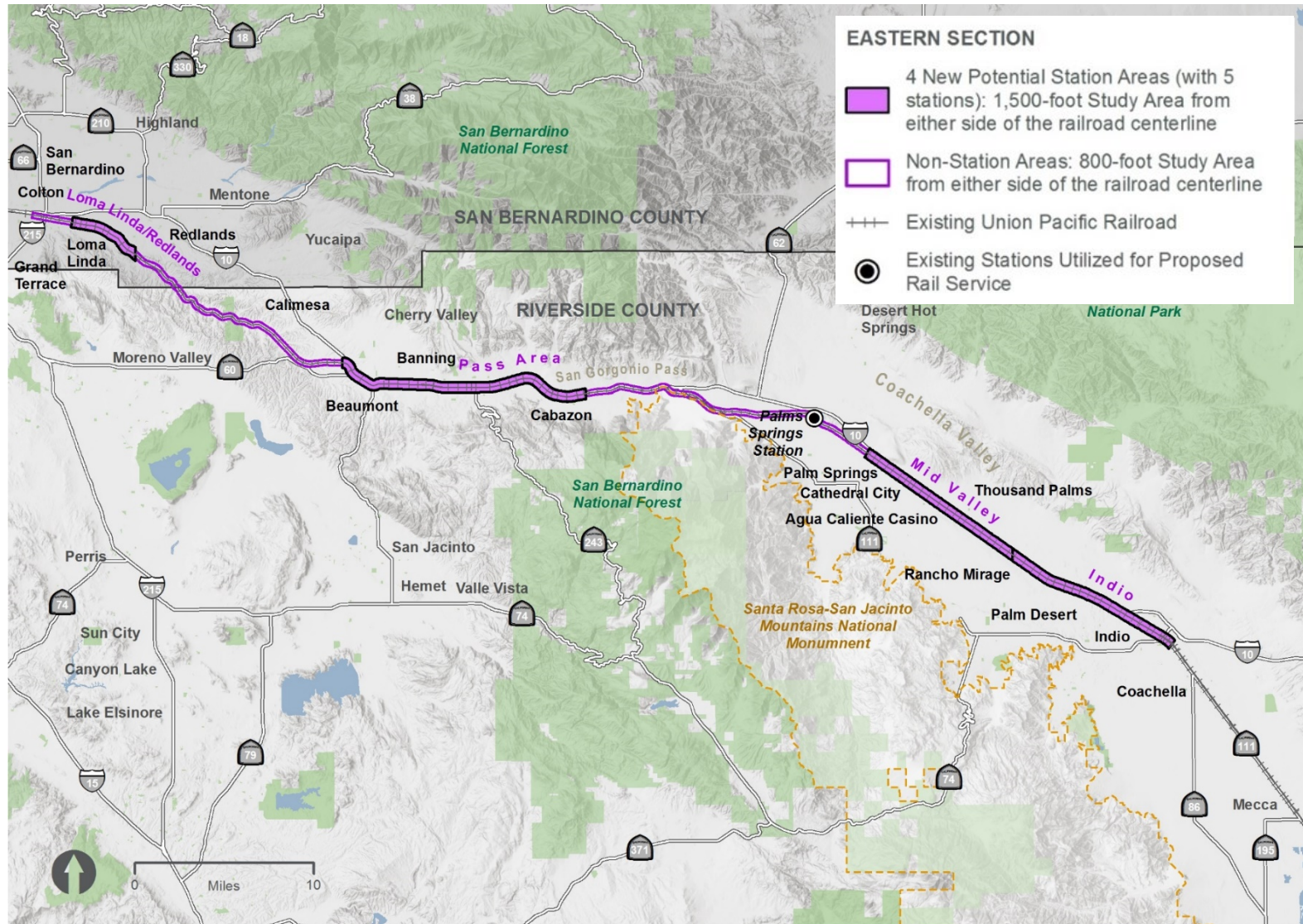
Document Availability and Opportunity to Comment

The Draft Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR was released on May 21, 2021 and will be available for public comment until July 6, 2021.

Digital copies of the full Draft Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR are available to review on the following web pages:

- RCTC website
  RCTC.org/cvrail

- FRA website https://railroads.dot.gov/environment/environmental-reviews/coachella-valley-san-gorgonio-pass-corridor-investment-plan

- Regulations.gov

  https://www.regulations.gov/document/FRA-2021-0048-0002

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Document Availability and Opportunity to Comment

Printed copies of the Draft Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Executive Summary are available for review at:

- Los Angeles Union Station/Metro Library and Archive
- Fullerton Public Library
- Arlington Library
- Riverside County Transportation Commission Offices (by appointment only)
- Colton Public Library
- Loma Linda Branch Library
- A.K. Smiley Public Library
- Beaumont Library
- Banning Public Library
- Palm Springs Public Library
- Riverside County Indio Branch Library
- Riverside County Coachella Branch Library

*Subject to library location hours and COVID-19 procedures

How To Submit Comments

Public Comment Period: May 21, 2021 to July 6, 2021

Please submit comments on the Draft Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR via the following methods:

During the Public Hearings: **TODAY** & June 26, 2021

Via Online form: https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FRA-2021-0048-0002

Via Mail*:   Federal Railroad Administration
        Amanda Ciampolillo, Environmental Protection Specialist
        1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
        Washington, DC 20590

*Comments that are mailed in should be postmarked July 6, 2021 or earlier.

Next Virtual Public Hearing

Saturday, June 26, 2021

9:00 AM

Register at: https://bit.ly/2Saioel
Meeting ID: 991 1521 8303

Spanish interpretation and English closed captioning will be available on Zoom

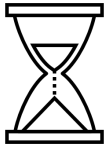*English & Spanish recordings of the public hearings will be posted on the project website*

Questions?

*This portion of the agenda is for clarifying questions only.
Please save your official comments for the next agenda item.*
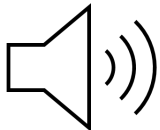
Comments Today

3 minutes per speaker

03:00

| Start | Stop | Reset | mins: 3 | secs: 0 | type: |

None ▾

Breaktime for PowerPoint by Flow Simulation Ltd.

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- Call-in users: Dial *9 to raise your hand

When it is your turn to speak:
- Zoom app users: You will be unmuted
- Call-in users: Dial *6 to unmute your mic when you hear your number announced

Stay Involved

Coachella Valley – San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Study

Email: CVrail@rctc.org

RCTC Website: RCTC.org/cvrail

Facebook: facebook.com/CVRailProject

FRA Website:
https://railroads.dot.gov/environment/environmental-reviews/coachella-valley-san-gorgonio-pass-corridor-investment-plan
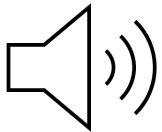
We're Here to Take Your Comment!

To request to speak:
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