



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

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**AGENDA*
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022
9:00 AM**

**Actions may be taken on any item listed on the agenda.*

This meeting will be held by Zoom webinar.

Please click the link below to access the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84973297348?pwd=Rm13T1Bmc1BCWIB6SEtya0V2VlhkZz09>

Or Telephone:
Dial: (669) 900-6833
Webinar ID: 849 7329 7348
Passcode: 010032

On March 17, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-29-20 suspending certain provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act in order to allow for local legislative bodies to conduct their meetings completely telephonically or by other electronic means. On June 11, 2021, the Governor subsequently issued Executive Order N-08-21 maintaining the suspension of certain provisions of the Brown Act to continue to allow for local legislative bodies to conduct their meetings completely telephonically or by other electronic means through September 30, 2021. In accordance with AB 361, VCTC meetings will continue to conduct its meetings by teleconference, its commissioners will participate in the meeting from individual remote locations, and no physical location will be open to the public for the Commission meeting. Members of the public will be able to virtually view and participate in the Commission meeting remotely. Members of the public who wish to address the commission on an item to be considered at this meeting are asked to please use/click the "Raise Hand" feature in Zoom (or *9 if you are calling into the Zoom meeting) at the time the Chairperson requests public comments. The Clerk will then advise you when it is your turn to speak. Verbal public comments are limited to three minutes.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Government Code Section 54954.2, if special assistance is needed to participate in the Commission meeting, please contact VCTC staff (805) 642-1591 ext. 101. Notification of at least 48 hours prior to meeting time will assist staff in assuring those reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility to the meeting.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** (For items not on the agenda) – *Under the Brown Act, the SPBLAC should not take action on or discuss matters raised during Public Comment portion of the agenda which are not listed on the agenda. Committee members may refer such matters to staff for factual information or to be placed on the subsequent agenda for consideration.*
4. **APPROVE SUMMARY FROM 10/20/2021 – SPBLAC MEETING – PG. 3**
5. **COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF REPORT** – *This item provides the opportunity for the SPBLAC members and 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. **SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022/2023 – PG. 5**
Recommended Action:
Receive and Comment.
8. **SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE 2021 BRIDGE INSPECTIONS – PG. 9**
Recommended Action:
Receive and File.
9. **SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ENCROACHMENTS AND LEASING UPDATE – PG. 15**
Recommended Action:
Receive and File.
10. **SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE RAIL OPERATOR LEASE UPDATE – PG. 17**
Recommended Action:
Receive and File.
11. **ADJOURN**



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

October 20, 2021

1:00 PM

www.goventura.org

SUMMARY

Ventura County Transportation Commission

Held via Zoom Webinar

751 E. Daily Dr., Suite 420, Camarillo, CA 93010

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Sobel called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Long, Commissioners Edmonds, Sobel, Johnson, and La Vere were in attendance.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

4. APPROVE SUMMARY FROM 3/23/2021 SPBLAC MEETING

Commissioner Edmonds made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Chair Long. The Committee approved the meeting summary by a vote of 5-0.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER / STAFF REPORT

Chair Long announced that County of Ventura redistricting is underway and stakeholder engagement is needed for draft maps.

Commissioner Edmonds inquired about the status of a tour of the Branch Line, but none had yet occurred and would be revisited once a new Executive Director is in place.

6. ADDITIONS / REVISIONS – None.

7. SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE 2020 BRIDGE INSPECTIONS – Receive and File.

Amanda Fagan provided an overview of annual bridge inspection reporting process, with the 2021 inspections due by December 31, 2021. Staff had expected that the bridge inspections would be conducted by the new operator, but with the new Agreement not yet in place, VCTC would need to hire a new rail inspection contractor to complete the 2021 inspections. A draft Budget Amendment to complete bridge inspections was provided to the Committee. The status of bridge maintenance by the previous rail operator Fillmore & Western was discussed. The Committee requested a review

of the 2021 bridge inspections report results against bridge maintenance work completed by Fillmore & Western.

8. **SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ENCROACHMENTS AND LEASING UPDATE** – Receive and File.

Amanda Fagan provided an update on existing leases and portions of the Branch Line being used by adjacent landowners without agreements in place, and VCTC staff efforts to address encroachments on the Branch Line. Two new leases had been executed since the March 2021 Committee meeting, with Parallel Systems and Rancho Dos Vasos. The Committee discussed challenges in accessing Branch Line property and efforts to reach agreement with landowners on updated lease rates.

9. **SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE TRESPASS REMOVAL POLICY UPDATE** – Receive and File.

Amanda Fagan provided an overview of implementation of the Trespass Removal Policy in the City of Santa Paula. VCTC staff worked with the City of Santa Paula and Santa Paula Police Department, and developed tools and methods, to implement the Trespass Removal Policy and address encampments on the Santa Paula Branch Line. Steps to address vehicles parked on VCTC property was discussed. Cleanup efforts along the Branch Line were also discussed.

10. **SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE RAIL OPERATOR LEASE UPDATE** – Receive and File.

Amanda Fagan provided an update on the status of the rail operator lease negotiations with Sierra Northern Railway and introduced the Sierra Northern Railway leadership team to the Committee.

11. **ADJOURN**

Commissioner Sobel adjourned the meeting at 1:55PM.



Item # 7

TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM: AMANDA FAGAN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY
SUBJECT: DRAFT SANTA PAULA BRANCH BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022/2023

RECOMMENDATION:

- Review draft Fiscal Year 2022/2023 budget for the Santa Paula Branch Line and provide comments to staff.

DISCUSSION:

The Draft Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) reflects the first full year of operations under the new Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement (Agreement) with Sierra Northern Railway (SNR). The Budget provides for operations and maintenance and associated costs for asset management, maintenance, and operational obligations along the thirty-two miles long railroad corridor. The budget also includes VCTC staff costs for lease and asset management, such as issuing new and updated leases and licenses and working with City and County partners to implement the SPBL Recreational Trail Master Plan and complete the trail.

The Draft Budget includes operations and maintenance of the full SPBL right-of-way, with reimbursement of up to \$450,000 in expenses related to deferred and regular maintenance of the rail infrastructure and right-of-way, pursuant to the Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement. The Draft Fiscal Year 2022/2023 SPBL Budget is \$111,100 lower than the previous year, due to reduced VCTC contribution to the operations and maintenance costs for the Branch Line resulting from the executed Agreement. The Signals Repair and Replacement and Non-Rail Maintenance expense categories have been absorbed into the Track Maintenance category in accordance with the Agreement.

Revenues for the Santa Paula Branch Line come from four primary sources: (1) Local Fees from lease revenue from the approximately 75 paying leases along the SPBL; (2) Local Fees from permits, filming, and rail car storage; (3) State Transit Assistance (STA); and (4) Local Transportation Funds (LTF). STA funds are used to cover the delta between Local Fee revenues and the deferred and regular maintenance reimbursement to Sierra Northern. LTF funds are used for VCTC staff salaries, benefits and indirect costs. It is anticipated that STA and LTF requirements for the SPBL Budget will be reduced over time as the Agreement with Sierra Northern matures.

BUDGET TASK: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE**DIRECTOR:** Amanda Fagan**BUDGET MANAGER:** Amanda Fagan**OBJECTIVES:** Manage the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) corridor.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The Ventura County Transportation Commission purchased the 32-miles long Santa Paula Branch Line in 1995 with funding from a Federal Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) grant and local sources. With the purchase of the Branch Line came leases for cultivation, utilities, crossings, and pipelines, which provide a portion of the revenue needed to support the line. In 2001, VCTC entered into a 20-year lease agreement with the Fillmore and Western Railway Company for maintenance and operation of the SPBL railroad. With these agreements comes the continual need to actively manage the SPBL.

During Fiscal Year 2021/2022, staff managed the day-to-day business of owning the SPBL, issuing right-of-entry permits, license agreements, weed abatement, trash removal, and interfacing with other jurisdictions on property management issues. Staff also worked to address encroachments into the railroad right-of-way by adjacent property owners and negotiated with landowners to execute new or updated leases and to remove encroachments into the operating right-of-way. With consultant support, VCTC met the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requirement to have all bridges inspected annually under VCTC's Bridge Management Plan and evaluate load carrying capacity as needed. Staff also provided administrative oversight for private development projects adjacent to the SPBL corridor in Santa Paula and Fillmore, with staff and legal costs fully compensated by the developers.

With the June 30, 2021 expiration of the lease agreement with Fillmore and Western, VCTC issued a Request for Proposals for Rail Operator Service in October 2020. After proposal review and negotiations, VCTC executed a Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement in December 2021 with Sierra Northern Railway (SNR) for a 35-year term. Under the Agreement, Sierra Northern Railway is responsible to operate and maintain the full SPBL right-of-way. For the first five years of the Agreement, Sierra Northern is entitled to reimbursement of up to \$450,000 in expenses related to deferred and regular maintenance of the rail infrastructure and right-of-way.

DESCRIPTION: The Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Santa Paula Branch Line Task Budget provides for coordination and oversight of the Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement, which includes railroad and signals operations and maintenance, weed abatement, debris cleanup, trespass removal, and bridge inspections. The budget also includes VCTC staff costs for lease and asset management, such as issuing new and updated leases and licenses. With a long-term operator in place, Staff may also focus on efforts to implement the SPBL Recreational Trail Master Plan and work with City and County partners to complete the trail.

The Fiscal Year 2022/2023 SPBL Budget is \$111,100 below the previous fiscal year, due to reduced VCTC contribution to the operations and maintenance costs for the Branch Line resulting from the executed Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement. The Signals Repair and Replacement and Non-Rail Maintenance expense categories have been absorbed into the Track Maintenance category in accordance with the Agreement.



BUDGET TASK: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE (continued)**DIRECTOR:** Amanda Fagan**BUDGET MANAGER:** Amanda Fagan**WORK ELEMENTS:**

1. Coordination and oversight of the Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement.
2. Continue to facilitate transition to new Railroad Operator.
3. Railroad operations and right-of-way maintenance, including response to neighbor complaints, weed abatement activities, tree, and brush trimming and removal, and annual rail bridge inspections.
4. Ensure compliance with policies of the VCTC and requirements of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and Surface Transportation Board (STB).
5. Prepare and administer leases, licenses, and right-of-entry permits for use of SPBL corridor property. Evaluate leases and establish a new rate schedule where applicable.
6. Implement VCTC Trespass Policy requirements.
7. Coordinate with Railroad Operator to identify and address areas of encroachment onto the railroad right-of-way through noticing and leasing.

PRODUCT: Continued safe and cost-effective management of the SPBL corridor.**FUNDING:**

Funding Source	Funding Dollars
LTF Fund Transfer	\$ 86,800
STA Fund Transfer	116,500
Local Fee – Leases	355,000
Local Fee – Permits, Film and Rail Car Storage	30,000
Total Funding	\$588,300

EXPENDITURE COMPARISON:

	Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Actual	Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Budget*	Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget
Salaries	\$ 62,716	\$ 73,300	\$ 38,300
Fringe and Tax	26,878	31,700	13,800
Indirect Cost Allocation	49,169	62,900	34,700
Mileage	217	500	500
Notices	2,026	500	500
Office Support	214	500	500
Consultant Services	84,099	65,000	30,000
Legal Services	68,416	50,000	20,000
Non-Rail Maintenance	104,207	50,000	0
Signal Repair and Replacement	0	40,000	0
Track Maintenance	450,000	325,000	450,000
Total Expenditures	\$847,942	\$699,400	\$588,300

* This budget task was amended after the Commission approved the budget in June 2021.



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Item # 8

TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM: AMANDA FAGAN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY
SUBJECT: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE 2021 BRIDGE INSPECTIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and File.

BACKGROUND:

In July 2010, the Federal Railroad Administration promulgated Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 237 – Bridge Safety Standards, which mandates that owners of railroads develop and adopt a Bridge Management Plan (BMP). As part of the BMP, bridges must be inspected annually for safety and engineering deficiencies, and by March 2017, all bridges in service must have had a bridge load capacity rating performed to determine the weight each bridge can safely carry. As owner of the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL), VCTC must comply with the federally mandated 49 CFR Part 237 on the prescribed schedule.

DISCUSSION:

In December 2021, VCTC rail engineering consultant Wilson & Company conducted the Annual BMP Bridge Inspection. Wilson & Company inspected and assessed each of the thirty-seven bridge structures in terms of condition, needed repairs, and estimated cost of repairs. Wilson & Company provided a written report in February 2021 within the required schedule. Total estimated maintenance costs are \$1,645,200, which is \$381,200 more than the previous year.

As summarized in Attachment A (VCTC SPBL 2021 Annual Bridge Inspection Summary), the four bridges with significant findings remain the same as the previous year: Mile Post (MP) 415.69, MP 415.92, MP 417.24, and MP 420.20 (Figure 1). These four bridges represent a total of \$816,600 in estimated repair costs, which is nearly half of the total estimated repair costs for all 37 bridge structures. The estimated cost of repairs is shown in Attachment B (2021 Maintenance List).

The Bridge Inspection Report has been provided to Sierra Northern Railway for their awareness and action to prioritize and address deficiencies and complete needed repairs.

Annual bridge inspections must be completed no later than December 31st of each calendar year. The responsibility to complete bridge inspections is included in the Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement with Sierra Northern Railway executed in December 2021. Sierra Northern will be responsible for completing the required inspections for 2022.



Figure 1. Selected Bridge Locations

VCTC SPBL 2021 Annual Bridge Inspection Summary

The 2021 Annual Bridge Inspection services were performed in the second week of December 2021. All of the inspections were done by Wilson & Company employees Todd Kelley, PE, David Linn and Masoud Rezaei. The annual inspection services include a visual inspection of 37 structures to assess and report on the condition of the structures. All 2021 reports have been reviewed and approved by project manager Todd Kelley, PE.


A full list of maintenance recommendations can be found in the 2021 maintenance report. A short list of the major items is listed below.

Recommendations:

- MP 415.69
 - The condition of the deck planks and stringers are deteriorating and should be scheduled for replacement within the next year.
 - The condition of this structure is deteriorating rapidly. We do not recommend closing the bridge at this time, but a slow order of 10 mph be placed on the bridge.
 - We do recommend a quarterly inspection (3 months) to assure the bridge is functional until repairs are made.
 - We also recommend the structure's previously calculated load rating of E52.0 from 2015 be updated based on the reduction of stringers from ten to eight based on the number of failed stringers.
- MP 415.92
 - The condition of the deck planks and stringers are deteriorating and should be scheduled for replacement within the next year.
 - The condition of this structure is deteriorating rapidly. We do not recommend closing the bridge at this time, but a slow order of 10 mph be placed on the bridge.
 - We do recommend a quarterly inspection (3 months) to assure the bridge is functional until repairs are made.
 - We also recommend the structure's previously calculated load rating of E118.5 from 2015 be updated based on the reduction of stringers from ten to six based on the number of failed stringers.
- MP 417.24
 - The condition of the deck planks and stringers are deteriorating and should be scheduled for replacement within the next year.
 - The condition of this structure is deteriorating rapidly. We do not recommend closing the bridge at this time, but a slow order of 10 mph be placed on the bridge.
 - We do recommend a quarterly inspection (3 months) to assure the bridge is functional until repairs are made.
 - We also recommend the structure's previously calculated load rating of E55.2 from 2015 should be updated based on the reduction of stringers from ten to seven due to failed stringers.
- MP 420.20
 - Additional steel stringers should be added to replace the temporary bents in the next year.
 - Ballast and deck planks are deteriorating and should be replaced within the next year.

Thank you for the opportunity to perform the annual inspection services for VCTC in 2021. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Joseph Holste, PE
Joseph.holste@wilsonco.com
(303) 501-1215

Structure #	Priority (years)	Description of Work - Maintenance	Est. Cost
407.48	1	Repair wingwalls to retain ballast	\$4,800
	1	Repair footwalk	\$2,400
408.02	3	Replace fouled ballast	\$6,000
	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	3	Replace ties	\$6,000
	1	Repair northeast embankment	\$3,600
	1	Repair fence breach	\$600
408.84a	<1	Remove vegetation under all spans	\$2,400
	<1	Repair backwall and scour before next rainy season	\$12,000
	3	Replace ballast	\$6,000
	1	Raise approaches on both ends	\$4,800
	<1	Replace walkway	\$2,400
408.84b	<1	Repair handrail cable	\$2,400
	<1	Repair walkway	\$4,800
	<1	Repair handrail post	\$2,400
	1	Remove vegetation under bridge	\$2,400
408.84c	1	Repair undermining at pier 3	\$4,800
	<1	Remove vegetation under all spans	\$2,400
	1	Raise approaches on both ends	\$4,800
	<1	Replace walkway	\$2,400
409.74	<1	Repair backwall and scour before next rainy season	\$12,000
	1	Replace ballast	\$6,000
	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
410.40	<1	Remove bees	\$1,200
	1	Remove vegetation from under and around bridge structure	\$6,000
	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	<1	Repair handrail and walkway	\$2,400
	1	J-Bolts need to be installed to prevent tie movement	\$1,200
411.97	1	Repair west wingwall to prevent further ballast loss	\$6,000
	<1	Repair handrail	\$1,200
	1	Replace rail to meet tonnage use	\$6,000
412.25	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	<1	Remove vegetation from under and around bridge	\$3,600
	1	Clean debris from around bearings both ends	\$2,400
	1	Raise approaches both ends	\$4,800
	1	Replace guard timbers	\$2,400
	1	Replace split tie	\$1,200
415.20	1	Add handrails	\$4,800
	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	1	Excavate to allow inspection or replace with culvert	\$12,000
	3	Replace rail to meet tonnage use	\$6,000
415.32	3	Repair wingwalls	\$4,800
	<1	Replace walkway grating	\$2,400
	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	3	Replace rail to meet tonnage use	\$6,000
415.59b	1	Excavate to allow inspection or replace with culvert	\$12,000
	1	Clean bearings	\$2,400
	1	Remove material between inside guard rail and running rail both ends, both sides	\$4,800
	1	Remove vegetation from under and around bridge structure	\$3,600
415.69	<1	Repair over fence breaches	\$2,400
	1	Raise east approach	\$2,400
	1	Replace rotten deck planks	\$60,000
	<1	Replace failed/rotten/crushing stringers	\$180,000
	<1	Quarterly inspections until deck and stringer repairs are made	\$4,200
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
415.79	1	Repair wingwalls	\$4,800
	1	Repair ballast guard	\$1,200
	1	Add ballast to approaches	\$3,600
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
415.82	1	Clean channel to allow inspection or replace with culverts	\$12,000
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	1	Repair wingwalls and headwall retainer, both ends	\$3,600
	1	Replace sway braces	\$3,600
	1	Raise ballast at approaches	\$3,600
	<1	Shim pier to provide bearing	\$1,200
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	1	Ballast planks beginning to fail. Replace if maintained as a bridge	\$30,000

Structure #	Priority (years)	Description of Work - Maintenance	Est. Cost
415.92	1	Walkway has uneven surface and is a tripping hazard	\$2,400
	1	Shim helper bents to stringers noted in report	\$1,200
	<1	Replace failed and rotten stringers or replace with culverts	\$180,000
	1	Repair handrail	\$1,200
	<1	Quarterly inspections until deck and stringer repairs are made	\$4,200
	1	Repair wingwalls	\$4,800
416.21	<1	Fix fence gaps at corners of headwalls	\$2,400
416.32	1	Raise and straighten both approaches	\$6,000
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	<1	Bridge has silted in more, channel needs cleaning to prevent water from hitting stringers	\$12,000
	1	Repair erosion around wingwalls	\$2,400
416.63	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	1	Repair backwall locations that are leaking	\$6,000
417.24	<1	Remove vegetation under and around bridge	\$6,000
	<1	Replace bad track ties	\$2,400
	1	Clear boulders, trees & other debris from under bridge to allow max flow & prevent damage to pile	\$3,600
	2	Repair backwalls	\$24,000
	<1	Replace ballast planks with stringer replacement	\$42,000
	<1	Replace bad stringers.	\$180,000
	<1	Quarterly inspections until deck and stringer repairs are made	\$4,200
	1	Repair erosion around wingwalls	\$3,600
	1	Correct rail alignment	\$4,800
	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	<1	Repair handrails	\$2,400
417.96	3	Level track across structure	\$6,000
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	3	Replace loose block	\$600
418.02	1	Clear debris from under bridge	\$2,400
	1	Raise approaches both ends	\$4,800
	1	Replace failed deck planks	\$30,000
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	2	Install ballast curbs to prevent ballast loss	\$3,600
419.42	<1	Remove overhead vegetation	\$2,400
	2	Repair scour and protect both abutments	\$36,000
	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	<1	Repair handrail both sides	\$2,400
419.92	<1	Protect Abutment #1 from further scour	\$12,000
	1	Raise approaches both ends	\$4,800
	1	Replace missing, rotted and broken bracing	\$6,000
	1	Replace rotten backwall planks	\$24,000
	1	Repair holes in ballast near both abutments	\$2,400
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	2	Increase height of SW ballast retainer to hold ballast	\$2,400
420.20	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	<1	Shim temporary bents	\$1,200
	1	Add supplemental steel stringers to replace temporary bents	\$18,000
	1	Add handrail	\$6,000
	1	Repair ballast retainer and deck planks	\$24,000
	2	Repair sway bracing	\$3,600
	3	Repair rotten backwall	\$24,000
420.46	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	2	Repair abutment ballast retainer west end and add at east end	\$2,400
	2	Repair west backwall	\$12,000
	1	Replace broken bent 2 sway brace, attach bent 4 brace	\$4,800
	1	Repair holes in deck planks	\$2,400
421.05	1	Remove vegetation under and around bridge	\$2,400
	1	Clean silt from span 1	\$6,000
	1	Raise approaches both ends	\$4,800
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	2	Replace / Repair / Install ballast retainers at both ends on both sides	\$4,800
	1	Clean channel downstream	\$6,000

2021 Maintenance List

Structure #	Priority (years)	Description of Work - Maintenance	Est. Cost
421.23	1	Raise approaches both ends	\$4,800
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	<1	Repair walkway	\$4,800
	<1	Repair handrail	\$2,400
	2	Replace stringers on span #1 & #2 . Monitor stringers if condition worsens and raise priority.	\$90,000
	1	Increase ballast depth to 12 in minimum	\$3,600
422.53	<1	Remove vegeration around bridge	\$2,400
	1	Add j-bolts to attach ties to stringers along with guard timbers	\$2,400
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	1	Raise approaches on both ends	\$4,800
422.89	1	Raise approaches on both ends	\$4,800
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	1	Replace fouled ballast	\$3,600
	1	Add ballast retainers	\$6,000
423.28	1	Raise approaches	\$4,800
	<1	Repair handrail cable north side	\$2,400
	2	Clean bearings. Monitor condition and raise priority if necessary	\$2,400
423.44	1	Remove vegetation from under and around bridge	\$3,000
	1	Add ballast - ballast 3" bellow top of tie	\$6,000
	1	Raise west approach	\$2,400
	1	Remove debris from bents	\$6,000
	2	Add scour protection at Abutment 1	\$30,000
425.15	<1	Repair fence breach	\$1,200
	<1	Repair loose handrail cable	\$2,400
427.64	<1	Clear vegetation on north and south side of bridge	\$3,600
	<1	Clear channel	\$6,000
	1	Raise approaches both ends	\$4,800
	1	Replace ties	\$3,600
	3	Replace rail with heavier section as tonnage dictates	\$6,000
	<1	Clean debris from stringers	\$2,400
	1	Repair backwalls	\$6,000
429.79b	2	Raise both approaches	\$4,800
	1	Clear abutments, center pier and bearings of silt and debris	\$6,000
Total Maintenance Costs 2021=			\$1,645,200
*All cost estimates increased by 20% to account for increase in material prices in 2020/2021			



Item # 9

TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM: AMANDA FAGAN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY
SUBJECT: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ENCROACHMENTS AND LEASING REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and File.

BACKGROUND:

The Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) consists of 99 parcels owned by VCTC and runs for 32 miles from Mile Post (MP) 403 to MP 435, with 29 active track miles extending through MP 432. The SPBL property has 75 active paying leases and generated \$338,015.93 in lease, film, and other local fee revenue in Fiscal Year 2020/2021. The SPBL currently has 621 total ongoing leases, the majority of which are for utilities (458 leases) or access (74 leases) that do not pay lease fees on an ongoing basis. Leased areas include 25 cultivation leases extending 11.55 miles, where agriculture occurs on some portion of the property owned by VCTC and leased to private parties.

Most recently in March 2021, the Commission directed staff to address encroachments through leasing activities to ensure fairness among neighboring landowners and generate revenues to sustain SPBL management and operations. An initial field study conducted in February 2020 and an analysis of the SPBL property indicated that many neighboring properties have extended cultivation activities and/or access onto the public property without entering into a lease with VCTC. These encroachments include row crops, lemon and avocado trees, equipment and materials staging areas, and other uses of the public property without an active lease or other permission to access the Branch Line property.

Though used for a public purpose, railroads are considered private property, unlike streets and highways. In California, courts have found that railroads are not subject to adverse possession, so users cannot gain a right to use the railroad property by using or occupying the property.

DISCUSSION:

The Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement with Sierra Northern Railway transfers responsibility for operations and maintenance of the railroad and right-of-way to Sierra Northern. However, the Agreement retains to VCTC the right and responsibility of managing leases and licenses for the SPBL right-of-way and provides for cooperation between VCTC and Sierra Northern to address encroachments into the right-of-way to ensure that railroad operations are not impacted and that proper leases, licenses, and crossing agreements are in place with the appropriate insurance coverage by users of VCTC-owned property.

As leases are renewed or reassigned, VCTC continues to work with landowners to update rent values consistent with current market rates. For leases with termination provisions, VCTC staff will continue to work proactively with leaseholders to update leases to market rates. Since the SPBL Advisory Committee last met in October, five new or updated leases have been executed (Sierra Northern Railway master lease, Warring Water Service, Frontier Communications, Limoneira, and Parallel Systems). Notably,

VCTC executed in March 2022 an updated lease and new crossing agreement with the Limoneira Company for 13.45 acres of cultivation, access, and related activities around Mile Post 409 – 410 west of Santa Paula. VCTC also executed an amendment to the Parallel Systems access lease with a new location and expanded operations. Two leases are currently in the development process and nearing execution, including reassignment of the Lindgren Lease to the Underwood Partnership, and a utility license for an under crossing for a battery storage project in Santa Paula (Black Walnut).

VCTC Staff continue to conduct field study to document encroachments, prepare and send letters to neighboring property owners to notify, educate, and inform the owners about the need for a lease to access or cultivate within the public right-of-way or on railroad property, and give property owners sufficient time to respond, execute a lease, or remove encroachments and/or cease access without permission. VCTC staff has not yet been able to access all of the Branch Line to conduct a detailed evaluation due to difficulty of access on certain portions of the Line without crossing private property; however, from a visual inspection, it is anticipated that additional encroachments along the Line are occurring. VCTC Staff will work with Sierra Northern to identify and prioritize encroachments that impact safe and efficient rail operations on the SPBL.



Item # 10

March 23, 2022

MEMO TO: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM: AMANDA FAGAN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY
SUBJECT: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE RAIL OPERATOR UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Receive and File.*

BACKGROUND:

Anticipating the expiration of the 20-year operating lease for the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) on June 30, 2021, VCTC issued on October 2, 2020, a Request for Proposals for an Operator of Rail Services, with proposals due in December 2020. VCTC received two proposals, which were reviewed by a team of VCTC Staff and short line rail experts. VCTC entered into negotiations with the highest rated proposer and has worked to reach agreement on the terms and conditions of a long-term lease for operations and maintenance of the SPBL.

On June 30, 2021, the 20-year lease and operating rights to the Santa Paula Branch Line held by Fillmore & Western Railway expired, at which time Fillmore & Western would no longer conduct rail maintenance and inspections, nor respond to emergency calls. Though substantial progress had been made toward agreement between VCTC and the prospective rail operator, no formal contract had been approved by the Commission prior to the June 30th expiration of the operating lease with Fillmore & Western Railway. To ensure continuity of necessary rail maintenance and inspections and responsiveness to emergency calls on the SPBL while negotiations continue, VCTC entered into an Agreement with Sierra Northern Railway for Track and Signal Maintenance. The contract extended through December 31, 2021.

On December 16, 2021, the Commission approved a Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement with Sierra Northern Railway. The Agreement became effective on December 26, 2021, with Sierra Northern taking responsibility for operations and maintenance of the SPBL rail and right-of-way effective January 1, 2022.

DISCUSSION:

Sierra Northern Railway has begun active operations and has initiated improvements to the SPBL right-of-way and rail lines. Sierra Northern has attracted two new railroad-related businesses to the SPBL, a business that provides railroad ties across Southern California called Stella Jones and a rail steel supplier named A&K Railroad Services serving the Southern California market. Sierra Northern has been in

discussions with several local businesses to provide freight rail services and will continue to develop the freight business. Sierra Northern has purchased remaining equipment from Fillmore & Western Railway and is in the process of transitioning to operations out of the Fillmore Rail Yard. Sierra Northern also continues to reach out to local businesses and residents to share information and build relationships with the community.

On the tourist/excursion side of the business, Mendocino Railway has conducted a market study through a marketing consultant and is in the process of selecting a new name for the excursion rail business on the SPBL. Once a name is selected, branding and marketing can begin, with train service to follow. Mendocino Railway anticipates that rail bike service will begin Summer 2022, with excursion trains late Summer / Fall 2022.

Staff will provide a verbal update and introduce the leadership team from Sierra Northern Railway to the Santa Paula Branch Line Advisory Committee.