

# WRONG TRACK - WRONG LOCATION!

Transportation agency ignores existing commuter rail destinations!

By R. A. "Barney" Barnett

March 22, 2010

For the last 8 years the agency responsible for making transportation decisions in our area continues to completely ignore the requests from the people in the region when it comes to commuter rail station locations and destinations.

On Jan. 25, 2010, the Riverside County Transportation Commission Ad Hoc committee rejected our requests to build a Metrolink station right next to the track where commuter trains pass by 7 days a week between San Bernardino and Riverside. Instead, RCTC wants to build a station only ½ mile away, right next to another track where there are no commuter trains at all! Does this seem logical? Is this really true?

**Track layout:** At Highgrove just south of Main St. at the San Bernardino/Riverside County line, the tracks split. One track goes toward Perris and the other 3 tracks go toward Riverside. This split results in 19 acres of pie shaped vacant land between these 2 different railroads. The Perris Valley Line track is on the east side of the 19 acres and the 3 BNSF tracks are on the west side. RCTC wants to establish new commuter train service between Riverside and Perris but they need a U shaped curved track to reverse their northward direction from Riverside to Highgrove, to a southward direction from Highgrove to Perris.

Without this curve to connect the 2 railroads at this location, no commuter trains will be able to operate between Riverside and Perris unless the engineer changes ends.

**Why changing ends is necessary:** All train movements are operated by an engineer located in the front of the train. But commuter trains have the capability to be operated from either end. The commuter train engineer can control the train from the engine or from the rear coach compartment to go in the opposite direction. The engine stays attached but pushes the coaches instead of pulls them. But before going in the opposite direction, the engineer has to walk to the opposite end of the train and a brake test must be made by the crew to visually check the brakes to see if they work properly. This procedure can be very time consuming.

In the future, when the engineer is operating the train from the engine going northward from Riverside to Highgrove for example, after the curved track is built, he would be able to stay in his seat and go around the new proposed curve to head back southward toward Perris.

This would save a lot of time and we have no objection to this portion of the plan.

## **HERE IS THE PROBLEM: STATION LOCATION**

Highgrove already has commuter trains 7 days a week, on the west side of the same vacant 19 acres needed for the curved track. One station platform at Highgrove could accommodate commuters now, by just stopping some of the existing commuter trains, and the same station platform could be used to serve future commuters to Perris when the Perris Valley Line is completed. The distance between these two locations is only ½ mile but they **have different destinations!**

RCTC's plan does not include stopping any of the existing commuter trains between Riverside and San Bernardino even after the Perris Valley Line track is finished!

During a one year construction period of the Perris Valley Line railroad for example, there will be 3,224 commuter trains between Riverside and San Bernardino that pass through Highgrove. Some of these trains could stop for passengers. This same piece of property could be used for both the station and the curve.

**\$232.69 Million dollars** of our Federal Tax Money and Measure "A" tax money (RCTC figure), is estimated for this 24 mile upgrade, but the RCTC plan ignores the existing Metrolink commuter trains between Riverside County and San Bernardino County. Their plan reverses direction just before it reaches the San Bernardino County line and turns back into Riverside County toward Perris.

**Perris Valley Line expenses:** 24 miles of the Perris Valley Line track need to be completely upgraded for passenger service. New rail and ties are needed in the roadbed, additional tracks have to be built for meeting or passing other trains and new engines and new coaches are needed. (Coaches are \$1.96 million each). Also, there is no Centralized Traffic Control system at all on the Perris Valley Line track! CTC is a traffic signal system for trains that allows the train dispatcher to control train movements from their control point in San Bernardino. The San Bernardino train dispatcher is now able to give existing freight trains a signal into or out of the Perris Valley Line track at Main Street. But once the entire train is on the track to Perris, there are no CTC signals for

38 miles where the track dead-ends in San Jacinto. A whole new train signal system has to be installed between Highgrove and Perris.

**Highgrove is cost effective:** The Highgrove Metrolink station location does not need any new track improvements or CTC signal system, or new engines, or coaches, and no new crew members are needed. The commuter train schedule is already established between Riverside and San Bernardino and all that is needed is a platform to stop some of the existing trains where there is ample room for parking. The Highgrove location would save several million dollars because additional property of 10 or more acres would not have to be purchased at Palmyrita Ave., Columbia Ave. or Marlborough Ave. for another station. Building a station on a track where there will not be any commuter trains for several years is a waste of our tax money especially when there are existing commuter trains every day of the week only ½ mile away with better destinations. Location, location, location-Highgrove is the most logical location and most cost effective way to spend our tax money to address the present and future transportation needs of the region.

\$232.69 Million of our tax dollars should be spent to benefit the entire region on both sides of the county line and not just 2 locations within Riverside County. And 3,224 commuter trains per year will literally take thousands of vehicles off of our freeways!

**SOLUTION: BUILD A METROLINK STATION IN HIGHGROVE RIGHT NEXT TO  
THE BNSF MAIN LINE WHERE THERE ARE EXISTING COMMUTER TRAINS!**

**R. A. “Barney” Barnett**  
**Chairman, Highgrove Municipal Advisory Council**  
474 Prospect Ave.  
Highgrove, Ca.  
92507  
(951) 683 4994  
E-Mail: [highgrovenews@roadrunner.com](mailto:highgrovenews@roadrunner.com)

**HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO!**

**Please look at our website for additional information: [www.highgrovehappenings.net](http://www.highgrovehappenings.net)**

Spread the word via e-mail and ask your friends to contact our Federal and State politicians listed below and ask that our tax money be used to build a Metrolink station in Highgrove!

Please send your comments to:

**Federal Transit Administration**  
**Mr. Leslie Rogers, Region 9**  
201 Mission St. Suite 1650  
San Francisco, Ca.  
94105-1839  
[leslie.rogers@dot.gov](mailto:leslie.rogers@dot.gov)  
(415) 744-3133  
(415) 744-2726 fax

**Senator Dianne Feinstein**  
750 B St. Suite 1030  
San Diego, Ca.  
92101  
[www.feinstein.senate.gov](http://www.feinstein.senate.gov)  
(619) 231-9712

**Senator Barbara Boxer**  
3403 Tenth St, Suite 704  
Riverside, Ca.  
92501  
[www.boxer.senate.gov](http://www.boxer.senate.gov)  
(951) 684-4849  
(415)403-0100  
(202) 224-0454 fax

**Southern California Regional Rail Authority**  
700 S. Flower St. 26<sup>th</sup> floor (METROLINK)  
Los Angeles, Ca. 90017-4104  
[veroo@scrra.net](mailto:veroo@scrra.net)  
Attn. Keith Millhouse, Chairman  
(213) 452 0245

**Southern California Association of Governments**  
818 W. Seventh St. 12<sup>th</sup> floor  
Los Angeles, Ca. 90017  
[rushen@scag.ca.gov](mailto:rushen@scag.ca.gov)  
Attn. Hasan Ikhata, Executive Director  
(213) 236 1800

See next page for additional addresses)

Senator Bob Dutton  
3780 Market St.  
Riverside, CA 92501  
(951) 715 2625  
(951) 715 2627 fax

[senator.dutton@sen.ca.gov](mailto:senator.dutton@sen.ca.gov)

Congressman Ken Calvert  
3400 Central Ave. Suite 200  
Riverside, CA 92506  
(951) 784-4300  
(951) 784 5255 fax

[www.calvert.house.gov](http://www.calvert.house.gov)

Assemblyman Brian Nestande  
1223 University Ave. #230  
Riverside, CA 92507  
(951) 369-6644  
(951) 369 0366 fax

[briannestande@asm.ca.gov](mailto:briannestande@asm.ca.gov)

Congressman Jerry Lewis  
1150 Brookside Ave. #J-5  
Redland, CA 92373  
(909) 862-6030  
(909) 335-9155 fax

[www.house.gov/jerrylewis](http://www.house.gov/jerrylewis)

Assemblyman Kevin Jeffries  
41391 Kalmia St. Suite 220  
Murrieta, Ca. 92562  
(951) 894 1232  
(951) 894 5053 fax

[assemblymember.jefferies@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.jefferies@assembly.ca.gov)

Congressman Joe Baca  
201 N. "E" St. Suite 102  
San Bernardino, Ca. 92401  
(909) 885 2222  
(909) 888 5959 fax

[cong.baca@mail.house.gov](mailto:cong.baca@mail.house.gov)

Assemblymember Wilmer Carter  
335 N. Riverside Ave.  
Rialto, CA 92376  
(909)820 5008  
(909) 820 5098 fax

[assemblymember.carter@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.carter@assembly.ca.gov)

Mobility 21-Six County Coalition  
One Park Plaza Suite 600  
Irvine, Ca. 92614  
(949) 288 6884  
(949) 264 1456 fax

[mprimmer@mobility21.com](mailto:mprimmer@mobility21.com)

Assemblyman Bill Emmerson  
10681 Foothill Blvd. Ste 325  
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730  
(909) 466-9096  
(909) 466 9892 fax

[assemblymember.emmerson@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.emmerson@assembly.ca.gov)

San Bernardino Associated Governments  
1170 W. Third St.  
San Bernardino. Ca. 92410-1721  
(909) 884 8276

Attention Barbara Robinson Barmack

[dbarmack@sanbag.ca.gov](mailto:dbarmack@sanbag.ca.gov)

**PLEASE WRITE OR E-MAIL ANY OR ALL OF THE ABOVE REPRESENTATIVES** and send a copy to Eliza Echeverria, RCTC Community Relations Manager, (echeverria @rctc.org), and a copy to me to add to our 8 year long paper trail! Our voices must be “heard” in writing rather than just a phone call. Thank you!

R. A. “Barney” Barnett  
474 Prospect Ave.  
Highgrove, Ca.  
92507

(951) 683 4994  
(951) 683 7258 fax  
E-mail: [highgrovenews@roadrunner.com](mailto:highgrovenews@roadrunner.com)  
Web site: [www.highgrovehappenings.net](http://www.highgrovehappenings.net)

**HIGHGROVE IS THE RIGHT TRACK AND THE RIGHT LOCATION!**