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44°F

Calendar



Today in
S.C.V. History

October 1 2017 - One SCV resident, John Phippen, killed and at least 9 others wounded in Las Vegas mass shooting that leaves 59 dead, 851 wounded [\[story\]](#)



[Metrolink Upgrades to Include More Double-Tracking in Saugus](#)
[Stephen K. Peeples](#) | Friday, Aug 23, 2019



Extending double-tracking and upgrading the Santa Clarita train station platform in Saugus are among the proposed infrastructure improvements to the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line approved by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority on July 25.

The improvements include adding 1.6 miles of new track to double-track the stretch from the end of the Bouquet Junction bend northeast to Golden Oak Road, and widening Santa Clarita Station's platform to accommodate the new two-track line.

Once through the environmental impact gauntlet and the final design and funding are in place, the proposed projects would cost an estimated \$173.5 million and require two and a half years to 10 years complete, according to Metro officials.

The improvements would speed up Metrolink rail service and continue building passenger ridership on the 76.6-mile Antelope Valley Line, or AVL, which connects Lancaster in North Los Angeles County with Union Station in Downtown Los Angeles.

The AVL is a 76.6-mile Class 4 rail corridor route owned by Metro and used by the Southern California Regional Rail Authority, or SCRRA, running Metrolink commuter rail service between Union Station and Lancaster as well as Union Pacific Railroad for Class 1 freight service. Union Pacific trains transport goods between the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and distribution centers in the Antelope Valley.

The AVL has three stops in the Santa Clarita Valley — the Jan Heidt Station in Newhall; the Santa Clarita Station in Saugus; and the Via Princessa Station in Canyon Country.

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Jan Heidt Newhall Metrolink Station stop.

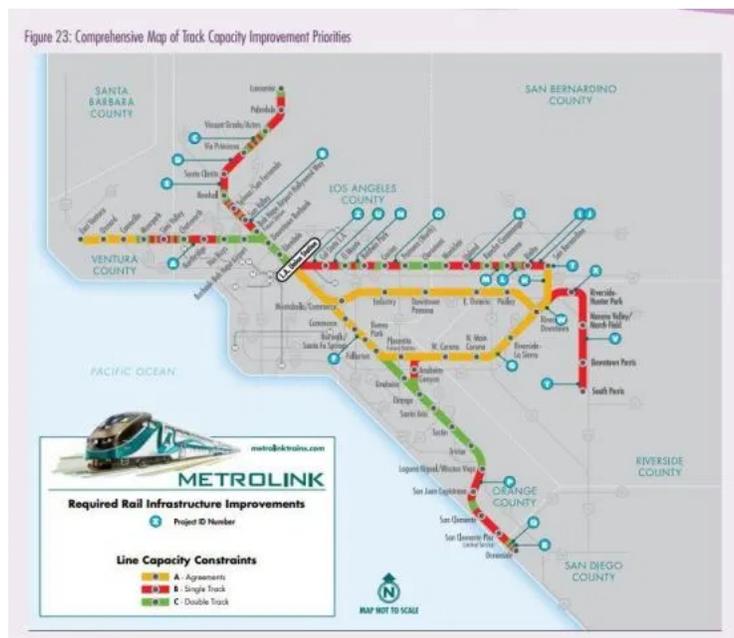
Right now, up to 30 Metrolink commuter trains and 12 Union Pacific freight trains per day traverse the corridor. The average passenger rail trip between Lancaster and Union Station with 11 station stops is approximately two hours and 15 minutes.

To shorten the commute to 1 hour and 40 minutes, Metrolink currently operates two weekday roundtrip express trains from Union Station to with passenger stops only at the Burbank Downtown, Sylmar/San Fernando, Santa Clarita and Palmdale stations. The Antelope Valley Transi also runs five round trips with bus service between Santa Clarita and Lancaster.

Metro’s long-term goals for the AVL are two-way service every 30 minutes throughout the day from any SCV station, cutting commute time downtown Los Angeles and the Antelope Valley to an hour, and adding late-evening service.

Double-tracking, or extending railroad track sidings, would allow more train traffic to move faster along the line.

The proposed SCV improvements have been integrated into Metrolink’s [10-year Strategic Plan](#) to significantly improve rail travel in Souther



Metro officials say adding the 1.6 miles of new track in Saugus between the Bouquet Junction bend and Golden Oak Road off Soledad Canyon as well as the Santa Clarita Station platform improvements, can be made on the existing railroad right-of-way without displacing any businesses along the route.

Let’s take a closer look.

* * * * *

The AVL Study and Scenario 3 in the SCV

According to Metro, the Antelope Valley Line carries the Metrolink commuter rail system’s third-highest ridership, which put the AVL in the first time in 2018, after years of subsidies.

AVL passengers reduce the equivalent of one lane of traffic from local freeways during peak driving hours and eliminate about 1 million weekday automobile trips per year.

Metro officials view the AVL as a model for the current Metrolink regional rail system and a key to unlocking regional mobility, as outlined in [Rail Plan](#) and Metrolink’s SCORE program, which it uses to prioritize projects.



Seeking to build on that progress, the Metro Board commissioned the WSP consulting firm to conduct the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line Study to identify infrastructure improvements that would make service faster, more frequent and more energy-efficient.

The completed study outlined six “service scenarios,” which identified possible short-, medium- and long-term improvements in the 65.2-mile between the Burbank Downtown Station and the Lancaster Station.

The Board also commissioned the Mott McDonald consulting firm to produce the separate but related Los Angeles-Glendale-Burbank Study remaining 11.4 miles between Burbank Downtown and Union Station.

Metro Board Directors Kathryn Barger, Ara Najarian, Paul Krekorian and Hilda L. Solis moved to adopt the AVL Study’s first three suggested and related improvement projects. The full Metro board approved the directors’ [Antelope Valley Line Motion](#) at its July 25 meeting.

“Our city of Santa Clarita will dramatically benefit from the action taken today,” said Santa Clarita Mayor Marsha McLean, who attended the meeting to urge the motion’s passage, after the board’s unanimous 11-0 vote (two voting board members were absent — Los Angeles Mayor and Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia).

Related: [Metro Backs Antelope Valley Line Study Recommendations](#)

“Residents who regularly utilize Metrolink trains for their daily commute or recreational trips could soon have access to bi-directional service running every half hour between Union Station and our city,” McLean said.

According to the approved motion, Scenario 1-3 short-term improvements would require \$41.8 million in capital improvements and \$4 million annual costs, and mid-term improvements would require approximately \$175 million in capital costs, mainly for double-tracking identified in the study.

“To get these projects through environmental clearance and shovel-ready, the staff has estimated that \$12.75 million is required,” the motion said. “Shovel-ready is an important benchmark to position these projects for grant funding opportunities.”



Metrolink Antelope Valley Line improvements, with Scenario 1-3 projects highlighted in yellow. Circle No. 6 is the Canyon-Santa Clarita Siding Extension and station platform upgrade.

Barger, also an LA County Supervisor whose 5th District includes the Santa Clarita Valley, and a member of the [North County Transportation NCTC](#), has provided funding for the environmental report and final design for Scenario 3 improvements, said Jeanet Owens, senior executive

Metro Regional Rail, in an email.

“The construction costs of Scenarios 2 and 3 are not yet funded,” Owens said. “The preliminary total construction cost of Scenario 3 (would) approximately \$175.3 million. We are working closely with (the NCTC) and all stakeholders to apply for state, local and federal grants to fund construction. Looking at the glass half-full, if we were able to secure \$175.3 million, we could begin construction within eight months after f



“The study discusses the possibility of implementing Scenarios 1-3 over the course of between five and 10 years – with late-night trains and 1 Siding capital project being a five-year target and Scenario 3 projects being between years 5 and 10,” said David Perry, Transportation Deput office.

“The intent of the Supervisor’s motion was to best position all of the Scenario 1-3 projects, so it funds all the projects to shovel-ready at the s Perry said.

“That way if we are able to identify construction funds for all Scenario 3 projects, we would be able to significantly expedite them,” he said. “Theoretically, if we locked in all of the construction money in the coming months, these projects could all be completed within five years.”

Along with fast-tracking Scenarios 1-3, the Metro Board voted July 25 to prioritize the \$41.8 million Balboa Tunnel Siding Project south of t which would also help make hourly commuter rail service between North LA County and Union Station possible sooner than later. This imp recommended in the Union Station to Burbank study.

Scenario 3 would also earmark \$27.3 million for improvements to the Lancaster Metrolink Station, including new double-tracking, new stora platform upgrades, and \$57.3 million for the Brighton-McGinley stretch out of Burbank to connect double-track segments at both ends.

The approved motion additionally calls for “the implementation of a diesel, electric, battery electric or hybrid multiple-unit train pilot prograi Antelope Valley Line” and Metro’s pursuit of grant funding focused on reducing pollution from trains, all “in support of the integrated servic out in the [State Rail Plan](#).”

“The approved Board Motion directs Metro staff to report back in October with a status report (detailing what would be necessary) to bring tl projects included in Scenarios 1 through 3 to a ‘shovel-ready level,’” said Brian Balderrama, LA Metro’s senior director, program manageme rail, in an email.

“‘Shovel-ready’ means the environmental study and final design will be completed,” he said, adding that the October status report should inc development plans, funding options, cash flow considerations and associated operating costs.

* * * * *



The Santa Clarita Metrolink Station platform.

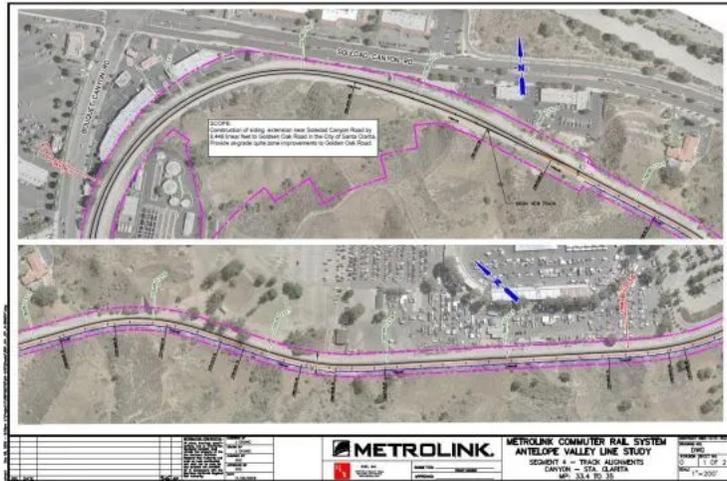
Canyon Siding Extension Project

While the AVL Study’s first two scenarios involve projects on the corridor north and south of Santa Clarita, Scenario 3’s estimated \$48.8 million Siding Extension double-tracking project and the Santa Clarita Station platform expansion are within the city limits.

The siding project would extend existing double track by another 8,448 feet (1.6 miles) in Saugus, from where the double track now ends just the Bouquet Junction bend to the at-grade crossing at Golden Oak Road and Soledad Canyon Road.

The new track would parallel the existing one, following the railroad right-of-way south of Soledad Canyon Road behind businesses, the Saugus and skirting the Whittaker-Bermite site.

“The proposed improvements are assumed to be contained within the railroad right-of-way and illustrate the adjacent ownership,” Balderrama referring to diagrams from the preliminary plans.



Proposed Metrolink Antelope Valley Line Canyon-Santa Clarita double-tracking and platform expansion, part of Scenario 3 of the AVL Line Study approved by the Metro Board July 25. The purple lines represent the railroad right-of-way, and the orange line represents the new track. These images show the new track’s projected path (from left) from the Bouquet Junction bend heading northeast behind the Saugus Speedway.

Proposed Metrolink Antelope Valley Line Canyon-Santa Clarita double-tracking and platform expansion, part of Scenario 3 of the AVL Line Study approved by the Metro Board July 25. The purple lines represent the railroad right-of-way, and the orange line represents the new track. These images show the new track’s projected path running (from left) through the Santa Clarita Station northeast to the at-grade crossing at Golden Oak Road.

First Things First: EIR, Design

“All the proposed AVL improvements including the Canyon Siding Extension project will require an environmental study that will identify a environmental impacts including right-of-way,” Brian Balderrama, LA Metro senior director of program management for regional rail, said in

Balderrama added that Metro plans to reach out to surrounding communities as well as those people and business directly adjacent to the project and after final approval, “to continue project collaboration, awareness and gain their support.”

But first, staff must complete those environmental reports and designs for the proposed capital projects.

“A scope of work was added that included the attached Canyon Siding Extension project concept drawings for more project detail,” Balderrama “Funding opportunities and cash flow considerations for the 10-year Strategic Plan will be included in the staff report to the Metro Board’s O

meeting.”

* * * * *

Scenarios 4-6: A Look Down the Line

While not approved July 25, Scenarios 4-6 remain on Metro’s back burner.

“Scenarios 4 through 6 can still be considered especially as we go through the environmental study,” Owens said, adding that a timeframe for has not yet been determined.

Scenario 4’s proposed improvements include most of Scenario 3’s projects, plus more double-tracking and platform upgrade at the Lancaster train sets, estimated to cost roughly \$30.1 million); a new 13,200-foot siding in Acton (\$40.2 million); 5,808 feet of new double track between (Canyon Country) and the Via Princessa Station (\$26.4 million); connecting sidings at each end and converting to double-track at Hood-Saug million); and 8,976 feet of new double track at Roxford in Sylmar (\$42.7 million).

The Metrolink Via Princessa Station in Canyon Country is the northernmost of the three Metrolink stations in the city of Santa Clarita.

Scenario 5 would also call for more double-tracking and platform upgrade at the Lancaster station as in Scenario 4. Also proposed: new double two platform tracks at the Palmdale North station (to be integrated with high-speed rail, \$127.3 million); extending existing siding at Ravena 13,200 feet (new double track, \$56.3 million); the aforementioned 1.6-mile Canyon Santa Clarita Extension (\$48.8 million) and Balboa-tunnel (\$41.8 million); 13,200 feet of new double track in the Sheldon Street-Van Nuys Boulevard area (\$67 million); and the Brighton-McGinley d connection (from Scenarios 3 and 4, \$57.4 million).

Scenario 6’s proposed improvements are outside the SCV.

“This AVL Study is the initial study only and can be changed as we go into environmental study and design, especially as we learn more info Owens said.

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[Homecoming 2019: COC Football Overpowers Cerritos in Second Half](#)

The festivities started early at Cougar Stadium on Saturday as College of the Canyons hosted its 50th Anniversary Homecoming Celebration before the COC football team took the field to face Cerritos College.



[Oct. 8: Breast Cancer Awareness Forum at Henry Mayo](#)

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital will provide a free educational forum in the Henry Mayo Education Center on Tuesday, October 8 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.



[Now Shooting in SCV: Movies, TV Shows, Spots](#)

The city of Santa Clarita has released the list of movies, TV shows and commercials being filmed in the Santa Clarita Valley the week of September 30-October 6, 2019:



[Santa Clarita Planning Commission Meetings - Oct. 1 Agendas](#)

The city of Santa Clarita's Planning Commission has released the Oct. 1 agendas for a study session and a regular meeting at City Hall.



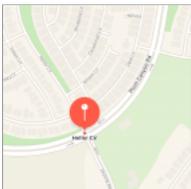
[Oct. 1: Wildcat Volleyball 'Claw Out Cancer' Event to Aid Circle of Hope](#)

The 2019 West Ranch High School girls' volleyball team will host its annual "Claw Out Cancer" match and fundraising event at the school's gym on Tuesday, October 1, 2019, beginning at 3 p.m.



[Detectives Ask Help to Find Plum Canyon Hit and Run Suspect](#)

Detectives from the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Station are asking for the public's help to find a suspect who struck and seriously injured a pedestrian in Saugus early Friday morning.



[Wilk's SCV Water Agency Legislation Signed into Law](#)

California Governor Newsom has signed Senate Bill 387 into law, the water agency bill's author, Sen. Scott Wilk (R-Santa Clarita) announced Monday.



[College of the Canyons: 50 Years of Brilliance](#)

The first classes at College of the Canyons began in 1969, but this story actually begins two years earlier. That's when the citizens of the Santa Clarita Valley decided it was time they had a college to call their own.



[COC Holds 50th Anniversary Homecoming Celebration](#)

Under the Cougar Stadium lights, College of the Canyons invited faculty, staff and students to the 50th Anniversary Homecoming Celebration Saturday night.



[Newsom Signs Bill to Let College Athletes Take Endorsement Deals](#)

In a move that could change amateur sports and is sure to draw legal challenges, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed a bill Monday to allow college athletes to hire agents and make money from endorsement deals.



[County Tests New Voting System During Mock Election](#)

Replacing the status quo and procedure for the first time in decades, county officials introduced Santa Clarita to Los Angeles County's new electronic voting system Saturday.



[City Responds to Old Town Newhall](#)

[Woman Charged with Animal Cruelty](#)

[Today in SCV History \(Sept. 30\)](#)

[Today in SCV History \(Sept. 29\)](#)

[Tenants: Beware Overhead CAMs](#)

[Today in SCV History \(Sept. 28\)](#)

[Concerns Over Filming, Parking](#)

The city of Santa Clarita is considering a filming moratorium in Old Town Newhall on Fridays and Saturdays after businesses in the area raised concerns over parking due to filming activity on those days.



['Barely Alive' Dog Dies](#)

A woman was arrested on suspicion of animal cruelty in Saugus on Friday afternoon after witnesses phoned the sheriff's station to say they saw a dog yelping loudly.



1955 - Actor James Dean, 24, drives through Castaic Junction en route to his final resting place [\[watch\]](#)



1969 - College of the Canyons opens with first class of students in temporary quarters at Hart High School [\[story\]](#)



[Commentary by Carl J. Kanowsky, Esq.](#)

Tenants must realize they are responsible for helping to pay for the maintenance, upkeep, repair and, in some instances, replacement of common areas.



1918 - Box-office superstar William S. Hart promotes 4th series of Liberty Loan (World War I) bonds, which go on sale on this date [\[story\]](#)



[Sept. 29: Valencia High Choir to Perform at Monterey Jazz Festival](#)

Valencia High School's Two N' Four Jazz Ensemble will perform at the 62nd Annual Monterey Jazz Festival, the longest-running jazz festival in the world, on Sunday, September 29.



[Oct. 2: Smith to Present \\$450K Check to Senior Center](#)

California Assemblywoman Christy Smith (D-Santa Clarita) will visit Bella Vida, the Santa Clarita Senior Center, to present a check to the center for \$450,000 on Wednesday, Oct. 2, the 38th Assembly District's Senior Appreciation Day.



[Swan Center Outreach Seeks Donations to Fund Move](#)

Swan Center Outreach, a 501c3 nonprofit organization currently located in Castaic, must secure a facility for its horses, programs and operations by October 1.



[LA County, Dodgers Team to Boost Mental Health Awareness](#)

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation have teamed for a multi-year effort to bring mental health out of the shadows and into the public spotlight through a multi-faceted awareness campaign.



[Supes May Freeze Sheriff's Budget; Villanueva Fires Back](#)

In their next meeting Tuesday, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors will consider a motion to freeze the LA County Sheriff's \$3.5 billion budget, which ran at a \$63.4 million deficit in Fiscal 2018-2019.



[Man Arrested After Allegedly Pointing Gun at Repo Man](#)

A Stevenson Ranch man was arrested on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon after allegedly pointing a gun at the head of a repo man who tried to repossess the suspect's car.



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