



**CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
AGENDA REPORT**

CONSENT CALENDAR

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: _____

DATE: July 14, 2015

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY PROJECT

DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office

PRESENTER: Michael Murphy

RECOMMENDED ACTION

City Council adopt the recommendation of the High-Speed Transportation Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to adopt a position of support for only fully underground alignments within the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section of the California High-Speed Rail Authority Project.

BACKGROUND

On June 9, 2015, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) Board of Directors (Board) met in Los Angeles to receive a presentation from CHSRA staff on the Supplemental Alternatives Analysis for the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section. At this meeting, both Mayor McLean and Councilmember Boydston testified on behalf of the City of Santa Clarita (City). Santa Clarita was also well represented by approximately 14 residents and business leaders, who also participated in the meeting's public comment period.

The staff presentation to the Board recommended the advancement of five alignments for further review as part the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) process. Of the five alignments advanced into the EIR/EIS, two alignments fall within the State Route 14 (SR 14) Corridor and include a short tunnel (SCS) and long tunnel (SCLT) option within the City. The three remaining alignments are all located within the East Corridor between Palmdale and Burbank, traveling under the Angeles National Forest and bypassing the Santa Clarita Valley completely.

The Santa Clarita City Council has consistently opposed any high-speed rail surface alignment being constructed within the City. Of the two alignments currently being studied within the SR 14 Corridor, the SCS alignment stands to have the greatest negative impact on the community, as it would travel at-grade for 2.1 miles through Sand Canyon before continuing into the unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County toward Agua Dulce going north toward Palmdale. In addition to the negative impacts an SCS alignment would have on the City, the alignment also includes at-grade and elevated track components through the City of San Fernando and portions

of the unincorporated communities of Agua Dulce and Acton.

As proposed, the SCS alignment stands to potentially have irreversible impacts on several significant properties in the community, including Sulphur Springs Elementary School, Pinecrest Elementary School, Church of the Canyons, and homes in the Sand Canyon neighborhood. The SCS alignment could also adversely affect future economic development enrichment opportunities, including the proposed mixed-use Vista Canyon development, which is poised to create a significant number of jobs for the eastern region of the City.

The second alignment within the SR 14 Corridor, the SCLT alignment, offers a 1.7-mile tunnel extension through much of the eastern portion of the City and would travel at-grade for .4 miles within the City's boundary before continuing into unincorporated Los Angeles County toward Agua Dulce. While the 1.7-mile tunnel extension identified within the SCLT alignment would mitigate many of the negative impacts associated with the SCS alignment, the tunnel would return to the surface in close proximity to several homes in Sand Canyon. Additionally, the SCLT alignment still incorporates at-grade and elevated track options through the City of San Fernando and portions of the unincorporated communities of Agua Dulce and Acton, making it an unfavorable option.

In the spring of 2012, the Board approved two surface alignments through Santa Clarita. The addition of the SCLT alignment by the California High-Speed Rail Authority was done in response to a request made by the Santa Clarita City Council in June 2012 to the Board. The Council requested a tunnel extension of at least two miles for consideration along with the two previously approved surface alignments being studied. Ultimately, one of the surface alignments through Santa Clarita previously approved by the Board has been eliminated.

Of the three East Corridor Alignments advanced into the EIR/EIS process:

- The western most alignment, E 1, includes at-grade and surface elements as it would travel from Palmdale under the San Gabriel Mountains and into Burbank.
- The alignment identified as E 2, follows the same path as the E 1 alignment as it leaves from Palmdale; however, it diverts from the E 1 alignment as it tunnels into the San Gabriel Mountains and includes at-grade and surface elements in the Shadow Hills area.
- The final East Corridor alignment, E 3, travels almost completely underground between Palmdale and Burbank, with the exception of short at-grade and tunnel elements in the Antelope Valley prior to tunneling under the San Gabriel Mountains.

On March 12, 2015, Mayor McLean convened a meeting with elected officials, business, education, and community leaders from the cities of San Fernando and Santa Clarita and the unincorporated communities of Agua Dulce and Acton to discuss concerns related to the proposed SR 14 Corridor alignments. The meeting also touched on the importance of continuing to study alignments within the East Corridor from Burbank to Palmdale and for the group to join together as a unified voice. From this meeting, the North Los Angeles Communities Protection Coalition was formed. The group adopted the position to support all appropriate and technically feasible fully underground alignments within the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section.

The CHSRA has implemented an aggressive schedule for the environmental review process for

the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section. The Draft EIR/EIS is expected to be completed in summer 2016, with the intention of having a final EIR/EIS completed in summer 2017. At the CHSRA Board meeting on June 9, the Board directed CHSRA staff to return in six months with updated information on the environmental review process for potential Board action, which could result in the elimination of unfeasible alignments.

As the Council is aware, the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section continues to evolve through various Supplemental Alternative Analysis reports, and the addition and refinement of alignments within the Project Section. Therefore, it is recommended that the City Council adopt the recommendation of the High-Speed Transportation Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to adopt a position of support for only fully underground alignments within the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section of the California High-Speed Rail Authority Project.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION

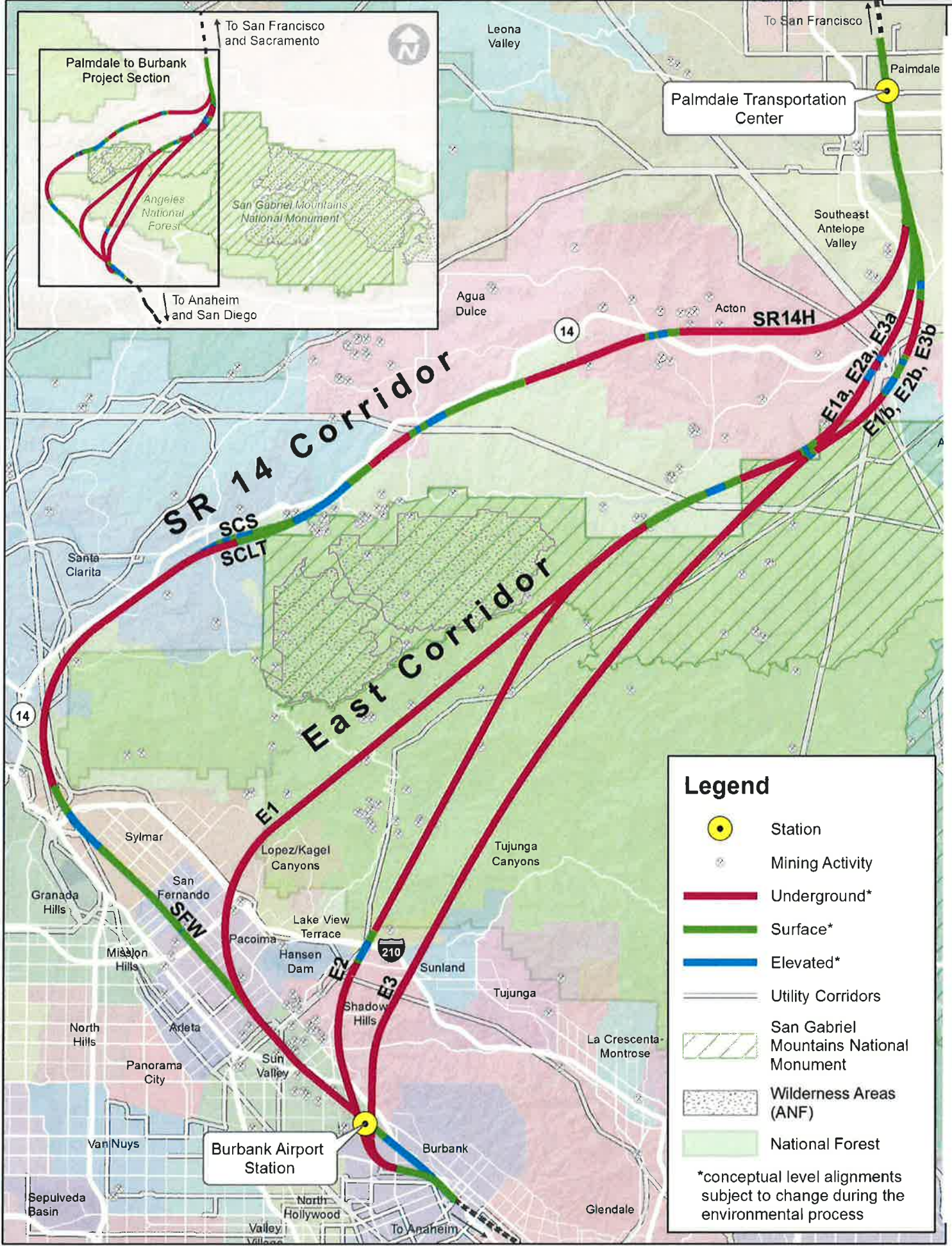
1. Recommend a different alignment as the preferred alignment of the City Council.
2. Other direction as determined by the City Council.

FISCAL IMPACT

No additional resources, beyond those contained within the Fiscal Year 2015/16 budget, are required for implementation of the recommended action.

ATTACHMENTS

Map of Palmdale to Burbank Alignments



Legend

- Station
- Mining Activity
- Underground*
- Surface*
- Elevated*
- Utility Corridors
- San Gabriel Mountains National Monument
- Wilderness Areas (ANF)
- National Forest

*conceptual level alignments subject to change during the environmental process

Attachment: Map of Palmdale to Burbank Alignments (1311 : California High-Speed Rail Authority Project)