



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

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TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2021

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARD: 2

SUBJECT: RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE RIVERSIDE DOWNTOWN METROLINK STATION IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

ISSUE:

The issue for consideration is to receive an update and presentation from the Riverside County Transportation Commission on the Riverside Downtown Metrolink Station Improvements Project

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Receive an update on the Riverside Downtown Metrolink Station Improvements Project; and
2. Provide the Riverside County Transportation Commission with direction regarding the City's support of this project

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Mobility and Infrastructure Committee met on July 8, 2021 with Chair Conder, Vice Chair Perry, and Member Hemenway present, and Councilmember Melendrez substituting for Vice Chair Perry to receive an update on the Riverside Downtown Metrolink Station Improvements Project. Following discussion and without formal motion, the committee unanimously received, and order filed the report and requested that an update be provided to the City Council during the comment period for the project's Draft Environmental Impact Report.

BACKGROUND:

The Riverside Downtown Metrolink Station is one of several transportation hubs within the City of Riverside and services both Riverside residents and neighboring communities. It is one of the key stops along the proposed Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service Project and provides links between several surface transportation modes including: Rail, local Riverside Transit Agency Service, Rideshare, Long-Range Bus Service, and bicycle storage. The station currently serves the Inland Empire – Orange County, Riverside, and 91/ Perris Valley Metrolink lines. The Downtown Station houses over 1,000 free parking stalls for Metrolink riders.

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration and Metrolink, propose building an additional passenger loading platform and tracks to improve Metrolink service and extend the existing pedestrian bridge to have additional elevator and stair access. The proposed track would connect into the existing station layover tracks on the south side. The Project would provide additional parking for the Metrolink station on the east side of the station.

The project sits within the Eastside Neighborhood and is in close proximity to the newly proposed Riverside Unified School District Eastside Neighborhood School, which would be bounded by Howard Avenue, 13th Street, Victoria Avenue, and 14th Street. The Eastside Neighborhood School would be a TK-6 Elementary School with 31 classrooms. The project is additionally adjacent to several proposed improvements funded through the Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities (AHSC) and Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) grant programs; AHSC & TCC transportation improvements are intended to improve residents' access to transit.

DISCUSSION:

Project Area, Objectives and Components

The project area, as shown in Figure 1, is generally to the east of existing Metrolink amenities and bounded by 12th Street, Howard Avenue, and 9th Street.

Objectives of the project include:

- Expand platform capacity to meet passenger train storage needs
- Allow for train meets off the BNSF mainline
- Improve transit connectivity and accessibility
- Facilitate more efficient passenger flow
- Enhance safety and access for station users
- Accommodate projected future demand

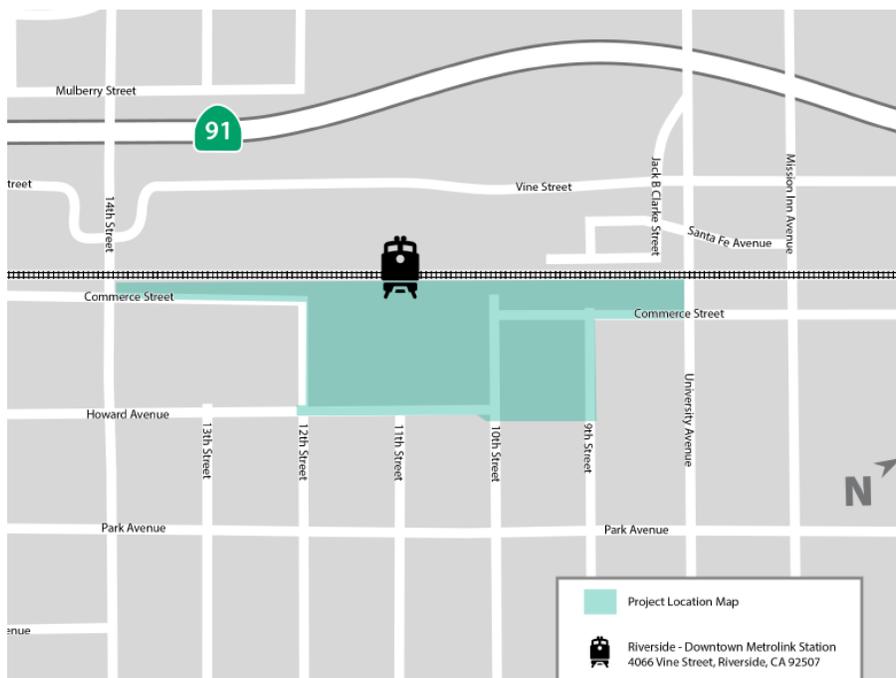


Figure 1: Project Location Map

Completion of the proposed Downtown Metrolink Station Improvements project includes several components:

- Building a new center platform
- Constructing new tracks and making other track improvements
- Modifying the railroad signal system
- Extending the pedestrian bridge, including elevator and ADA access
- Relocating ADA parking and approximately 550 new parking stalls to the station
- Modifying the bus drop-off area
- Adding sidewalks

These project components will require the expansion of the station easterly towards Howard Avenue, and potentially the vacation of segments of City roadway. The project also includes the proposed demolition of structures currently within the project footprint in order to facilitate new track & platform segments and completion of adjacent amenities.

Project Approvals

RCTC acts as the lead jurisdiction in processing improvements on their property and is not required to follow the RMC, including Title 19. Similar to developments managed by School Districts, State Universities and other public entities, projects such as the Downtown Metrolink Station Improvements would not go before the Riverside City Council for final approval. Discretionary review by the City would typically only be required for street and alley vacations associated with projects of this nature. Ministerial City review is still required for some service and safety related project elements, a general list of these items is shown below and will be refined as the project progresses:

- Street Improvements (Curb, gutter, sidewalk, street trees, driveway locations, paving matchups, and potential rehab of existing pavement) and Grading
- Street/Alley Vacations**, a Lot Merger / Consolidation, additional dedications of right of way along existing streets. (**Street/ Alley Vacations are a discretionary action)
- Water and Fire Services, Hydrants, and any necessary relocation of existing facilities.
- Sewer service and any potential relocations of existing facilities.
- New storm drain connections and any potential relocations or new storm drain lines.
- Emergency vehicle access including fire truck circulation through site.
- Trash enclosure locations and access
- Water Quality and Drainage
- New Street lights, potential power pole relocations, new electrical services.
- Building and safety review for parking lot improvements, lighting, structures, etc.

Project Timeline

At the time of this presentation, RCTC anticipates that a Draft Environmental Impact Report will have been circulated with a public hearing scheduled following this meeting date. The potential approval of the final environmental document is anticipated in September of 2022. During the environmental circulation period, City residents are encouraged to review and comment on the project so that their needs and thoughts are reflected in the final project document; City Staff will also review and comment on the environmental document.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The Downtown Metrolink Station Improvements project is proposed by RCTC and the City is a neutral party in the presentation of this item to the City Council. Therefore, no discussion will be provided as to whether the project aligns with the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this update.

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Approved by:	Kris Martinez, Interim Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachment: Presentation