We’re studying solutions for regional rail.

RAYMER TO BERNSON DOUBLE TRACK PROJECT
Frequently Asked Questions
1. Why are you building a double track?
   A double track improves the ability to move trains and reduces pollution from trains idling on either end of the current single-track segment. Currently 15 trains a day are delayed by 10-15 minutes each in this area due to the single track area.

2. Why did Metro decide to put a double track in a residential area?
   No decisions have yet been made, but there is an overall goal to have two tracks throughout Los Angeles County.

3. Why add a second track if ridership is low and more trains are not needed?
   Metrolink is just one of three rail providers that operate on the Ventura County line, along with Union Pacific and Amtrak. Double tracking is more about making it easier for trains to move, improving safety and reducing pollution. Reducing travel times and improving schedule reliability usually leads to ridership increases. That means fewer people driving by car. Additional passenger services may also be added in the future, which would also lead to increased ridership.

4. Double Tracking doubles the chances for derailment and head-on train crashes. How can two tracks be safer than one?
   Actually, double tracking reduces the likelihood of train collisions, similar to driving on a two lane road instead of a one lane road. Even with current safety procedures, including the coming implementation of Positive Train Control, double tracking goes even further to reduce the chances of a train versus train collision. During typical rail operations, one track is dedicated for all eastbound passenger and freight traffic, while the other is dedicated for all westbound traffic. One track is not designated for freight and the other for passengers.

5. Is a second track an excuse to go faster?
   No. Train speed is a function of the curves in the tracks, how the tracks are maintained and the spacing of the signals, not the number of tracks.

6. Can the crossings improvements be done without the double track?
   Yes, it would technically be possible to implement the crossing improvements without building the double track. However, the funding for the crossing improvements is tied to the double track project and the benefits that it brings to the transportation system in Southern California. The crossings are planned to be upgraded as part of that work. If the double track project does not go forward then the crossing improvements will most likely lose funding.

7. Will the second track add to the possibility of increased usage?
   There have been and will continue to be discussions of increased rail service by Union Pacific, Metrolink and Amtrak along the 351-mile Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail (LOSSAN) Corridor. These discussions are not dependent on whether a double track is eventually constructed in this area. The number of trains or the level of ridership might go up regardless of whether or not the second track is constructed. However, at this time, neither Amtrak nor Metrolink have specific plans or timelines for increasing the number of daily trains through this corridor.

8. With Union Pacific no longer sharing a track will we get more freight trains?
   Passenger and freight trains will continue to share tracks. A second track will allow all eastbound trains to be on one track, and all westbound trains on the other. Union Pacific controls its own operations and the number of freight trains it runs. Neither Metro, Metrolink nor Amtrak control how Union Pacific runs its freight trains.

9. With increased capacity will we get longer freight trains and additional traffic at crossings due to wait times?
   This project will have little effect on Union Pacific’s decision to operate longer trains. Longer freight trains are caused by increased demand and the economics of moving cargo.

10. What is the maximum capacity of this right-of-way and the two tracks?
    Currently along the single track area between CP Bernson and CP Raymer, Metrolink, Amtrak and Union Pacific operate approximately 35 weekday trains. If the double track project is completed the overall capacity could be increased to as many as 51 weekday trains. However, at this time, neither Amtrak nor Metrolink have any specific plan or timeline for increasing the number of daily trains through this rail corridor segment. Metro does not control how Union Pacific runs its freight trains.

11. How many oil trains will use the tracks on a daily basis?
    We don’t know how many oil trains Union Pacific will run on a daily basis. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is responsible for regulating freight traffic and rail safety.

12. Will there be more trains?
    As the population of California grows there may be a need for additional trains, but currently there are no plans to increase daily train traffic in the corridor.

13. Increasing the number of trains servicing CSUN is a good idea – we need more frequency.
    This was an opinion shared by a member of the public.
SAFETY

14. How does this make things safer? How can the double track increase safety to anybody? How can two tracks be safer than one? This project will increase the chance of collision? How will this help prevent a Chatsworth type accident?

Actually, double tracking reduces the likelihood of train collisions, similar to driving on a two lane road instead of a one lane road. Even with current safety procedures, along with the implementation of Positive Train Control, double tracking goes even further to reduce the chances of a train versus train collision. During typical rail operations, one track is designated for eastbound traffic, while the other is designated for westbound traffic. Passenger and freight trains will follow the same direction of travel. One track is not designated for freight and the other for passengers.

15. What if the train derails? What if a train derailment causes a jackknife into our neighborhood/homes?

The likelihood of a train derailing is remote through this area whether or not the double-track portion of this project is built. If a train accident occurs, emergency first responders will converge on the location and act accordingly, along with rail agency representatives and a myriad of investigative authorities.

16. Has the rail safety inspection criteria improved and how?

Yes. At no time in the history of rail have inspections and compliance been more stringent. There are safety and compliance officers with Union Pacific, Metrolink and Amtrak, while the FRA and the California Public Utilities Commission regularly perform unannounced inspections.

17. Is Metro 100% tied to safety improvements?

Yes. One of Metro's main tenets is safety. All of our projects are designed to be as safe as possible. The grant application approved for this project included both crossing improvements and the construction of a second track in order to improve safety.

18. Will the crossover tracks near my house increase the chance of an accident?

No. There are no plans to place a crossover track in the residential area of the project. A crossover is a special track component used for moving trains from one track to another. There is a “track shift” planned within the residential area. During project construction, a “track shift” is where the track is realigned to connect with new track.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AT CROSSINGS

19. Will double tracking double the chance of vehicle and pedestrian accidents at crossings?

No. The project is intended to improve nine rail crossings, which will create a safer environment for the community’s drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. Sadly, over the past 40 years, nearly 20 incidents or accidents have occurred at these nine respective crossings, leading to property damage, injury, and loss of life.

20. With longer and more freight trains will there be more accidents and delays at crossings?

No. The proposed project will improve safety in the corridor. The duration of a train passing by is due to the length of the train. We are not aware of any plans for longer and more freight trains in the corridor, the Union Pacific determines how many and how long their freight trains will operate. Metro has no control over Union Pacific operations.

21. How will emergency vehicles avoid these delays such as trips to Northridge Hospital?

We don't see additional delays at crossings. However, it is worth noting that one major route to the hospital, Reseda Blvd is already grade separated (has a bridge). If there was a delay at the Lindley crossing emergency vehicles could take Parthenia St (which is also grade separated) to Reseda as well.

OIL TRAINS

22. Will a second track add to the possibility of an oil train using the tracks?

Union Pacific already transports oil on this corridor. Union Pacific controls the type of cargo that can be transported on rail, in coordination with state and federal regulators. Metro has no control over what type of cargo Union Pacific transports.

23. If a train bomb goes off, like it did in China, how safe is it?

Obviously a similar incident would be tragic, however when comparisons are made to those operations, rail in the United States emerges as one of the safest and most fuel-efficient transportation modes according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Working together with environmental groups and lawmakers, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has created a series of safety standards that will further reduce the likelihood of such incidents. The safety standards address train cars that carry oil and other flammable materials. There has also been a rule added to prevent unattended trains that carry crude, ethanol, and other highly flammable contents from rolling away. Additional measures include updated braking systems for trains and a new maximum speed of 50 miles per hour.

24. Will crude oil trains be used on these tracks?

Currently, crude oil is already transported on the tracks.

25. Metro will you make it a priority to guarantee that you will not let the oil trains in our community?

The freight traffic on the line is controlled by the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR). Metro cannot control the cargo carried by UPRR. The Federal Railroad Administration regulates rail cargo safety.
26. What happens if an oil train derails?
   The likelihood of a train derailing is remote through this area whether or not the double-track portion of this project is built. If a train accident occurs, emergency first responders will converge on the location and act accordingly, along with rail agency representatives and a myriad of investigative authorities.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

27. How was the noise and vibration study performed?
   The study was a desktop (modeling) analysis that followed the Federal Transit Administration’s General Noise Assessment and General Vibration Assessment methodologies established by that agency in 2006.

28. What is the relevance of noise and vibration measurements?
   Measurements document existing conditions and establish a baseline from which changes may occur.

29. How was the decibel level increase calculated?
   The noise analysis used the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) General Noise Assessment spreadsheet model. Two versions of that spreadsheet model were used: 1) existing train noise based on the current single track operation and 2) future train noise looking at the existing level of train service but divided onto two tracks. The decibel level increase was calculated by determining the difference between the results of each of these two models. In short, we modeled both existing and future scenarios and compared the results.

30. What time of the day was it calculated?
   The noise analysis modeled train noise levels that occur throughout a 24-hour period. The FTA guidelines (FTA, 2006) asked for calculated train noise levels using a metric called day-night sound level (Ldn). The Ldn is calculated by combining 24 consecutive average hourly noise levels. In calculating Ldn, noise occurring during the nighttime hours (10:00 pm to 6:59 am) is weighted or penalized by 10 decibels (and is expressed using A-weighted decibels or dBA).

31. What study has been done to determine vibration levels?
   The sound consultant performed a FTA General Vibration Assessment. It was a modeling exercise and no field measurements were performed (FTA, 2006).

32. Did anyone come out and measure the noise and vibrations?
   Initially, field measurements were not performed as they are not required by the FTA’s General Noise and General Vibration Assessment methodologies. FTA provides guidelines for estimating or calculating noise and vibration levels. However, in late October 2015, field measurements were performed and we hope to share them with the public at our upcoming community meeting.

33. How loud is a decibel?
   A change of one decibel (an increase or decrease) is considered to be imperceptible to an average person. A change of three decibels (an increase or decrease) is considered to be barely perceptible to an average person. A change of five decibels (an increase or decrease) is considered to be clearly perceptible to an average person. A change of ten decibels (an increase or decrease) is considered to be perceived as a doubling or halving of loudness to an average person. These statements all share the assumption that background or every day noise levels do not obscure the noise source that you are trying to measure or hear.

34. Noise Vibration caused wires inside a wall to come loose and start a fire.
   Neither Metro or Metrolink are aware of incidents of this occurring in the United States. Throughout the country, passenger and freight trains operate in close proximity to buildings. If there were a direct relationship between train-induced ground-borne vibration and wire screw caps (twist-on connectors) to coming loose, it would likely be more well-known nationally. If you have specific information, please share it with us.

35. What is the Scope of Work for the noise study?
   The scope of work for the noise study prepared for the project’s environmental document followed the FTA’s General Noise and Vibration Assessment guidelines. These are modeling techniques and do not include the measurement of existing conditions (FTA, 2006). In response to community concerns, field noise and vibration measurements were performed in October, 2015. We now have measurement results and they are posted on our website.

36. Can you base the noise study on the maximum capacity for the two tracks?
   An analysis train noise based on the maximum capacity of the existing and proposed tracks would not be representative of the proposed double tracking project since no service increase is proposed as part of the project. To address future train service along the corridor, Metro will be evaluating the potential operational changes including increases in service frequency, along the entire corridor. Any operational changes for the corridor would occur independently of the proposed double tracking project and would be subject to a separate environmental process.

37. Can you mitigate that sound and vibration?
   Steps can be taken to reduce noise and vibration at the source from where they emanate, at the receiver where they are perceived, or along the pathway in between. Potential mitigation measures include wheel maintenance, noise walls, rail grinding, resilient track fasteners, establishing quiet zones to reduce horn noise (see below) and more.
38. Trains pass between midnight and 3am and shake our home like an earthquake. Objects fall off our walls. There are cracks in our foundation.
In late October, Metro conducted noise and vibration measurements along the corridor and hopes to share them with the public at our upcoming community meeting.

PROXIMITY TO HOMES

39. Moving the trains closer to homes means less safety in the event of a crash or derailment? What happens in a derailment in this area? The likelihood of a train accident is remote through this corridor whether or not the double-track portion of this project proceeds or not. If a train accident occurs, emergency first responders would converge on the location and act accordingly, along with rail agency representatives and a myriad of investigative authorities.

40. What barriers will be built for the lines in case of a derailment? There are no plans to construct barriers as part of this project.

41. What is the distance from the tracks “to the edges” of property lines? What is the distance from the existing tracks and the new tracks from homes?

### TRACK DISTANCE TO PROPERTY LINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CURRENT TRACK TO SOUTH PROPERTY LINE</th>
<th>CURRENT TRACK TO NORTH PROPERTY LINE</th>
<th>PROPOSED TRACK TO SOUTH PROPERTY LINE</th>
<th>PROPOSED TRACK TO NORTH PROPERTY LINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tampa to Northridge Station</td>
<td>50’*</td>
<td>70’</td>
<td>32’ Min to 35’ Max*</td>
<td>85’ Min to 88’ Max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindley to Louise</td>
<td>50’</td>
<td>65’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>80’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise to Balboa</td>
<td>50’</td>
<td>65’</td>
<td>68’</td>
<td>47’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This area contains no residential properties. All properties are industrial and/or commercial.
**HOME/PROPERTY VALUES**

45. Will real estate property values decline as a result of double tracking? What percentage of value loss will affect the properties? What will be the value of the homes?

Metro did not study and has not found any studies evaluating changes to property values in residential areas where a second track has been added to a preexisting rail track.

46. What is being done to mitigate property devaluation?

We are unaware as to whether or not there will be any documented impacts on property values in the area resulting from the proposed project.

47. Compensation to homeowners for additional property value loss?

Law requires compensation to property owners when the public agency is buying a portion or all of a property, or is using that property for a temporary purpose such as construction. The amount paid is determined based on an appraisal of the fair market value. There is no compensation provided for properties located in the general area that are not acquired for the project unless there is a demonstrated impact to the property or property damage caused by the Project.

48. What is being done to pay for city and county liability for all future damages to all kinds of residents?

Railroads are required to carry insurance to comply with federal liability levels. Metro is self-insured as a government agency.

49. Metro should guarantee our property values.

Under state and federal law, Metro is not able to guarantee property values.

50. Living close to public transportation increased property values.

This was an opinion shared by a member of the public.

**OPERATIONS**

51. How do the current trains operate in the corridor?

In the double tracked area along the Ventura Line, there is one designated track for all eastbound rail traffic, while the other is used for all westbound rail traffic. When a train approaches a single track area, a dispatching agent either allows the train to proceed or requires it to stop depending on any train movement from the opposite direction.

52. Does it increase capacity?

Rail traffic will not increase as a direct result of the proposed Raymer to Bernson Project. Future rail traffic increases depend on freight rail market conditions, and Amtrak’s or Metrolink’s decisions to initiate additional passenger rail services. However, by adding a second mainline track in an existing operating rail corridor, the ultimate capacity of the rail line will increase since trains traveling in opposite directions can pass without needing to hold and wait at signal control points.

53. Who owns the right of way?

The southern 40 feet of the right of way is owned by Metro, the northern 60 feet is owned by the Union Pacific Railroad.

54. How many trains are waiting for others to pass?

Currently 15 trains a day are delayed by 10-15 minutes each in this area due to the single track area.

55. What is a track shift?

The “track shift” is where construction stops for the new track on the north and starts for the new track on the south. “Track shift” is a construction term used to identify where track will be realigned to meet the new geometric layout of the tracks. In the case of this project, a new track is proposed on the north side of the existing track east of Balboa Blvd, and on the south side of the existing track west of Balboa Blvd; that is, the location of the new track within the corridor is “shifted” from the north side of the existing track to the south side.

56. Is this just the beginning of more tracks?

There are no plans for additional tracks in this corridor.

57. Does a crossover give you a different configuration?

There are no plans to place a crossover track in the residential area of the project. See the question above for more information about a “track shift.”

58. Will this project be just for Metro?

Metro does not operate rail service on this corridor. The project is for Metrolink and Amtrak passenger rail service as well as Union Pacific Railroad freight service along the corridor.

59. Why build this segment?

This segment of single track has numerous delays affecting the reliability of trains service. The State of California realized this and funded this project in the interest of reliable transportation.

60. Why not put the trains into a trench?

A trench was looked at during the course of the environmental analysis, which ultimately showed that it would be too expensive due to the length of the trench and the number of road crossings that would be affected. A trench would also cut-off rail access for the existing freight rail customers along the corridor.
Raymer to Bernson Double Track Project: Frequently Asked Questions

61. Why are the track shifts located in residential areas?
   The “track shift” is where construction stops for the new track on the north and starts for the new track on the south. “Track shift” is a construction term used to identify where track will be realigned to meet the new geometric layout of the tracks. In the case of this project, a new track is proposed on the north side of the existing track east of Balboa Blvd, and on the south side of the existing track west of Balboa Blvd; that is, the location of the new track within the corridor is “shifted” from the north side of the existing track to the south side. Additionally, utility lines are buried to the north of the existing track which would make construction on that side too expensive. However, next to the Van Nuys Airport, the new track must be constructed to the north of the existing track because a new track on the south side would be too close to the existing runway. A “track shift” is therefore needed to connect tracks in areas where construction of the new track changes from the south to the north side. West of the Van Nuys Airport, due to existing physical constraints, the closest point where this track shift can occur is west of Balboa Blvd (or in the residential area), because there is not enough distance between constraints to transition the tracks (through a series of curves and tangent segments, based on the design criteria).

62. Are there speed limits for trains?
   Yes, on the Ventura Line between CP Bernson and CP Raymer, the maximum allowable speed for passenger trains is 70 mph, while the maximum allowable speed for freight trains is 40 mph. Passenger trains could increase speeds up to 79 mph in the future.

63. Does anyone “police” the trains?
   Yes, in addition to having internal compliance officers, Union Pacific, Metrolink and Amtrak train movement is “policed” by the FRA and the California Public Utilities Commission.

64. Are there regulations for blowing horns?
   For safety purposes, federal regulation requires locomotive horns be sounded for 15-20 seconds before entering all public grade crossings, but not more than one-quarter mile in advance. This federal requirement preempts any state or local laws regarding the use of train horns at public crossings.

   The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) required pattern for blowing the horn is two long, one short, and one long sounding horn, repeated as necessary until the locomotive clears the crossing. Locomotive engineers retain the authority to vary this pattern as necessary for crossings in close proximity and are allowed to sound the horn in emergency situations.

   The federal regulation concerning train horns is officially known as the FRA’s Final Rule on the Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway/Rail Grade Crossings and became effective June 24, 2005.

   An exception to this can be created where a “Quiet Zone” is established exempting where locomotives from the requirement to sound their horn at a crossing.

CONSTRUCTION

65. Why not build the Chatsworth segment first and wait on this segment?
   The Raymer-to-Bernson segment has been identified by the State of California and FRA as an operational bottleneck where funding has been targeted to improve operating conditions. The segment of single track within the project limits currently experiences train traffic delays affecting overall operational and schedule reliability. In addition, the Northridge Station, located along this segment, creates additional delays when trains are stopped at the station, and other trains cannot pass.

66. Are they buying land for two tracks?
   There is no land purchase as part of this project. The tracks fit within the existing railroad right of way.

67. What protective barriers for lines will be built in case of derailment?
   There are no plans to construct barriers as part of this project.

68. Times for construction of tracks AM vs PM?
   Some night work will be done near the crossings. The following lists the overall guidelines that will be followed during construction to minimize impacts to homes, businesses, street traffic and train traffic:

   GENERAL:
   1. Shoring Installation: During the day if sufficiently far from the track. If very close, then shoring must be installed overnight, likely at Northridge Station, Limekiln/Aliso Creek Bridge (just west of the Northridge station), and Bull Creek bridge (approximately 1000 feet east of Balboa Blvd).
   2. Non-rail and non-station elements of Project are subject to the City of Los Angeles’s restrictions on construction.

   CONSTRUCTION AT NORTHRIDGE STATION:
   1. Construction of Northridge Station including a new pedestrian tunnel will occur on weekdays and weekends.
   2. Construction of Northridge Station crossover for track connection will occur overnight on a Friday night/Saturday morning (to remove part of the platform, grade the area, install drainage, and install track).
   3. Some bridge construction may take place during evening hours (see first item under General).

   CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN LINDLEY AVE AND BALBOA BLVD:
   1. Work will take place during daytime hours, and is also subject to City of Los Angeles construction restrictions.
   2. Shifting of the existing main track will occur on a Friday night/Saturday morning.
   3. Removal of the existing detector, will take place over the weekend.
69. Are any construction mitigation measures proposed?
Yes. The vast majority of the construction will take place during normal, daytime work hours. The City of Los Angeles has laws that also govern the times at which construction can take place. Since this project will modify some of the tracks, and passenger trains run during the daytime hours and in the evening, the work that will directly affect the existing tracks will need to be done during nighttime/overnight hours.

NORTH RIDGE STATION IMPROVEMENTS

70. Are there any plans for beautification of the railway area like the Orange line which is beautiful?
There are no beautification plans along the railroad tracks except for the Northridge Station. At the Northridge Station the project will add trees, shrubs and ground cover.

SOUNDWALLS

71. Can we get sound walls to reduce the noise?
There are currently no sound walls planned for this project. After Metro receives the results from the field noise and vibration studies that were carried out the week of October 5th and has further discussions with the community, staff will make a recommendation to Metro’s Board of Directors.

AIR QUALITY/TRAIN IDLING

72. How was the increase/decrease in pollution calculated?
As provided in the environmental document, construction-related emissions were calculated and determined to be below thresholds identified by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). Operational emissions are expected to decrease since no increase in train traffic is proposed (or projected) and also because Metrolink is currently in the process of retrofitting its fleet to meet United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Tier 4 emission standards. With the upgrading of passenger locomotives to Tier 4 standards (currently Tier 2), Metrolink is expected to achieve a 92% reduction in PM-10 (and diesel particulates) and an 80% reduction in NOx, a major contributor to ground-level ozone.

In addition, carbon dioxide (CO2) is expected to decrease since trains will be able to pass through the area rather than idling on either end of the current single-track segment. The project is expected to remove 53,548 metric tons of CO2 emissions over the next twenty years.

73. Will more trains mean greater pollution?
Eliminating the single track actually reduces the environmental pollution since trains will be able to pass through the area rather than idling on either side of the current single-track segment. Additionally, more people taking public transit lowers the number of passenger vehicles on regional roads and freeways further improving the air quality.

74. Will greater wait time at crossings due to more and longer trains increase air pollution?
The study did not look at whether or how much wait times might change for automobiles at rail crossings. However, since no increase in train traffic is anticipated as a result of the project, little if any change in wait times is anticipated.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)

75. We would like to see an environmental report not only for Metro trains but all trains.
Metro does not operate any trains in this corridor. Metrolink filed environmental documents for its system when it first started operations in the early 1990’s. Amtrak service and freight service started prior to the passage of the National Environmental Protection Act and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The environmental document that Metro prepared analyzed all trains including Metrolink, Amtrak and Union Pacific.

76. It’s important that an EIR is completed by an independent contractor. A true EIR needs to be done.
The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) specifies the type and level of environmental review for a proposed project based on its impact to the environment. In reviewing the environmental documents for this project, the California Secretary for Resources determined that a Full EIR is not required.

OTHER CONCERNS

77. Concern for kids and their future and homeownership. Afraid that his children will not be able to grow up in a home.
Metro shares your concerns and will work to make the corridor safe.

78. Please let us know where there is a side track in our neighborhood?
There are no siding tracks between Balboa Blvd and Lindley Ave. There are no siding tracks within the residential community west of the Northridge station.

79. Will there be additional usage on this route if the High Speed Rail is approved?
California High Speed Rail is still in the planning stages in Southern California and an increase or decrease in the level of Metrolink service associated with High Speed Rail is not yet known. High Speed Rail is not planning on using this corridor for its trains.
Contact Us

Please use the following contact tools for additional information, questions, or comments:

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