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## Offer an opinion on rail options

By: Charles F. Bostwick



PALMDALE - The public will have another chance to comment on the latest routes under study for California's proposed high-speed rail line between Burbank and Palmdale.

Made public this spring after a search for ways to let the 200-mph train travel in tunnels through the mountains separating Palmdale and Burbank, three alternatives are under consideration: two that would run south of Acton through the Angeles National Forest and one that would run north of Acton, essentially paralleling the Antelope Valley Freeway.

through the mountains separating Palmdale and Burbank, three alternatives are under consideration: two that would run south of Acton through the Angeles National Forest and one that would run north of Acton, essentially paralleling the Antelope Valley Freeway.

"These meetings are to update the public on the range of alternatives we are studying and to gather additional feedback for our environmental studies," California High Speed Rail Authority spokeswoman Adeline Yee said.

The first meeting is 5 to 8 p.m. Sept. 14 at the Larry Chimbole Cultural Center, 38350 Sierra Highway in Palmdale. The next meeting is 9 a.m. to noon Sept. 17 at High Desert School, 3620 Antelope Woods Road in Acton. Another meeting is planned 5 to 8 p.m. Sept. 22 at the Fernangeles Recreation Center, 8851 Laurel Canyon Blvd. in Sun Valley.

The meetings will let the public ask questions and provide comments regarding effects to the environment, including biological resources, cultural resources, air quality, noise, and community impacts, environmental justice, officials said.

Spanish interpretation will be offered at all meetings. All meetings will have the same presentation by high-speed rail officials one hour after the start time.

A live webcast of the Palmdale meeting in Spanish and English will be shown at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 14 at [ustream.tv/channel/chsra](http://ustream.tv/channel/chsra).

The route north of Acton, called "Refined SR-14," travels for more than a mile above ground where it crosses the Antelope Valley Freeway, which is within 1,500 feet of the new Vasquez High School campus, California High Speed Rail Authority documents show. The two southern routes, called "Refined E-1" and "Refined E-2," have a section east of Acton that travels above ground for more than two miles and both cross Aliso Canyon and Arrastre Canyon above ground.

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted this summer to oppose the "Refined E-2" after hearing complaints it would cut through the San Fernando Valley community of Lakeview Terrace.

Both southern routes run above ground along Sierra Highway through Palmdale to south of Lake Palmdale, then go underground near the Pearblossom Highway exit of the Antelope Valley Freeway, but surface again near Angeles Forest Highway. The routes go underground again but surface at Aliso Canyon and again at Arrastre Canyon.

"Refined E-1" continues southwest underground to cross under Pacoima before surfacing south of Hansen Dam Park in the San Fernando Valley and continuing to the Burbank airport. "Refined E-2" makes a sharper curve to surface east of Hansen Dam, running above ground through Lakeview Terrace before going underground through the Verdugo Mountains to the Burbank airport.

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"Refined SR-14" runs underground from south of Lake Palmdale to west of Acton, surfacing to cross the Antelope Valley Freeway near Red Rover Mine Road and going back underground. The route surfaces again to run south of the Antelope Valley Freeway south of Vasquez Rocks Natural Area, then join "Refined E-1" to go under Pacoima.

Proposed after other routes were studied, the three latest routes will be subjected to full analysis in an environmental impact report, high speed rail officials say.

California High-Speed Rail Authority officials disclosed in February that they plan to operate the 200-mph train first from near Bakersfield to San Jose or possibly to San Francisco - instead of starting train service from the Central Valley through the Antelope Valley to Burbank.

Rail officials said they have sufficient money to complete in 2025 a \$19.8 billion track now under construction from the Central Valley to Silicon Valley, but not to complete the route that must tunnel through the Tehachapi and San Gabriel mountains to reach Burbank or Los Angeles.

However, they are continuing to work on environmental studies for the Antelope Valley segments, which have drawn opposition from residents of Acton and from people who live west of Rosamond, where the tracks are now envisioned to run above ground.

While the latest route alternatives under study south of Palmdale would run through tunnels up to 16 miles long, Acton residents worry that a tunnel route would affect their rural lifestyle, either by disrupting well water supplies or by surfacing too near them.

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