

City of Santa Paula

Rail Line Redevelopment Plan

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June 6, 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a comprehensive tourism program for the downtown area of the City of Santa Paula, California. Uses will be recommended for vacant or underutilized parcels located along the rail line by providing services and amenities which will facilitate easy travel to, and throughout, the downtown area. This plan will explore rail transportation to and from the City of Fillmore, and will take into account planned expansion of the line from Ventura. This project will also reflect the needs, goals and objectives of various stakeholders in Santa Paula, which will be addressed in Section 4.3. The final product of this project will be recommendations for a tourism and transportation program and a list of uses for the identified vacant sites in the area around downtown.

1.2. Importance

This project will benefit the City of Santa Paula because it will emphasize the redevelopment of vacant parcels within the City. This will allow for the growth of the downtown area of Santa Paula, which will be the direct beneficiary of an expansion in tourism. The development of these sites in conjunction with a larger prominence for tourism in the City will provide major economic benefits. These benefits will be discussed in greater depth later in Section 2.3.

1.3. Rail history

From a phone interview conducted with Ken Brookes, Manager at the Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce on May 16, 2012 (see Section 3.2.), it was discovered that Santa Paula had a scheduled freight service from 1887 until it was ceased in April 2012. As such, there is currently no regular commercial freight service in Santa Paula. However, the city does still have a “Team Track” freight

service run by Union Pacific which delivers on an 'as needed' basis. The primary user of this service is the lumber industry, which hosts several mills in Santa Paula because of its location in the center of Ventura County. Lumber is delivered to mills in the City and sold to clients throughout the County. This service continues to exist, although there have been 0 deliveries in the past 2-3 years due to lack of building supply demand.

Currently, passenger rail service is for tourism only and is operated by the Fillmore & Western Railway Company. These runs do not function as a commuter service and only run on weekends and holidays.

Rail infrastructure is currently being improved throughout Ventura County. The Ventura County Transportation Commission, who own the rail line which travels through Santa Paula and lease it to Fillmore & Western and Union Pacific, is in the process of restoring passenger commuter service from Ventura to Santa Paula within 5 years, however financial issues may inhibit the ability of this plan to remain on schedule. The VCTC plan is set into two phases. The first phase will include the restoration of basic commuter service, with one run in the morning and one run in the evening. The second phase would see the restoration of freight and passenger service from Port Hueneme in Ventura to Santa Clarita and link through the proposed High Speed Rail system to Northern California. This second phase is a long term plan, with no specified deadlines for construction because of unpredictable financial issues.

1.4. Bus system

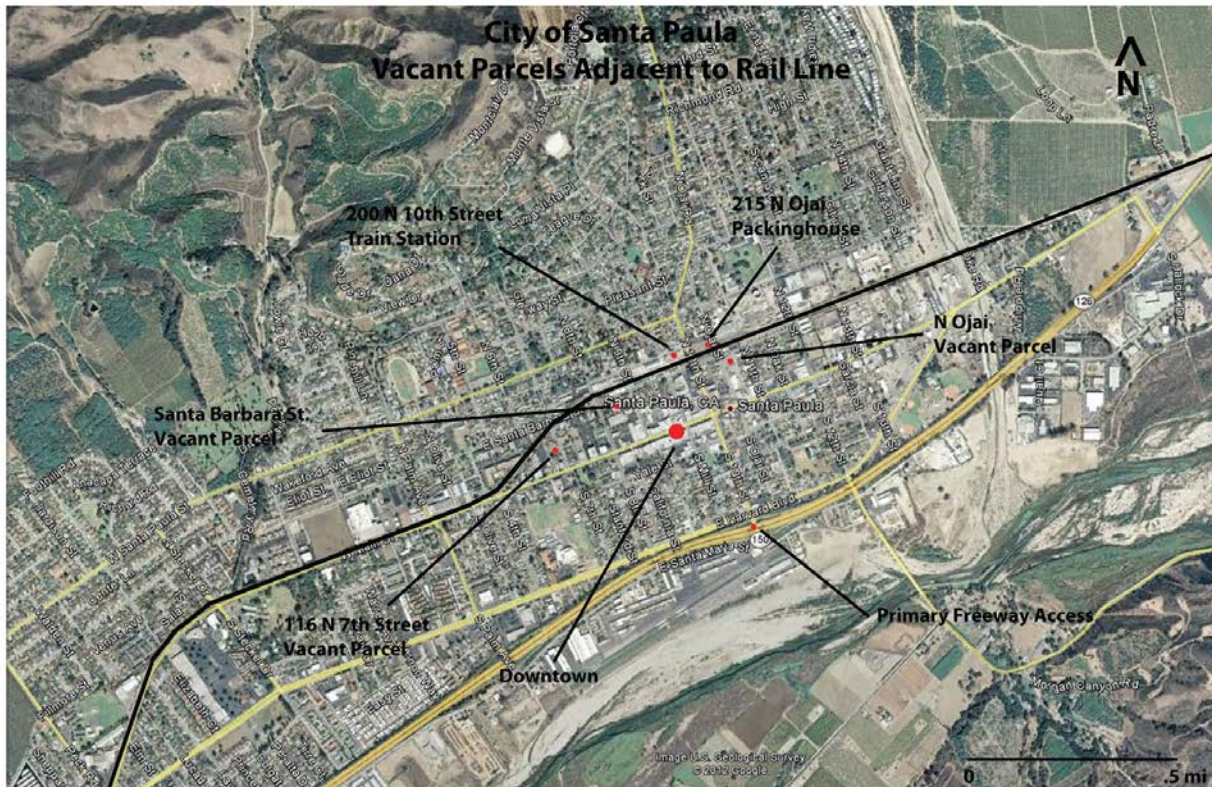
The bus system in Santa Paula is split into a local and regional system, of which both services are coordinated by the Ventura County Transportation Commission. The first system is a Dial-a-Ride system which provides address to address, on demand bus service that does not make use of traditional bus stops or routes. As such, ridership information is difficult to give (see Section 3.1.). The second system is a city-to-city regional bus, for which there are two stops located in Santa Paula; at City Hall and the K-Mart parking lot. According to Ken Brookes, the most common use of the bus system currently is for a user to take a Dial-a-Ride bus from their home to the bus station, and from there, take a regional bus to Ventura.

1.5. Accommodations

The city currently has three hotels and several motels, one KOA camp ground and one other RV establishment that tourists use when visiting Santa Paula for longer than one day. These are all small facilities that fill up when there is a major event in Santa Paula.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1. Site inventory



There are five sites identified as significant parcels for this project, which are illustrated in the above image. In addition to the train station located at 200 N 10th Street, there are also three vacant lots and an abandoned packinghouse. The scope of this project was limited to sites that are currently vacant or underutilized so no presently occupied structures will be addressed.

The following site inventory takes account of basic opportunities and constraints for each site, illustrated with a + or - symbol, respectively.

200 N 10th Street – Train Station

- + Located near downtown
- + Located near public open space
- + Bike trail travels adjacent to this site
- + Agricultural Museum located nearby
- Public parking issue may restrict this site as a tourism hub
- 10th/Santa Barbara is traffic impacted, restricting access to downtown



215 N Ojai – Packinghouse

- + Located near train station
- + Located near public open space
- + Rail pull-up connects site to line
- Pedestrian traffic to downtown channeled to 10th/Santa Barbara intersection
- Located adjacent to industrial uses



116 N 7th Street – Vacant Parcel #1

- + Vacant parcel located in residential neighborhood
- + Bike trail travels adjacent to this site
- Located outside .5 mi radius from downtown



Empty parcel at Santa Barbara St. and Davis St. – Vacant Parcel #2

- + Located near train station
- + Vacant parcel located in residential neighborhood
- + Located near public open space
- + Bike trail travels adjacent to this site
- Located on arterial road
- Telephone posts installed in parcel



Empty parcel at Santa Barbara St. and N Ojai – Vacant Parcel #3

- + Located near train station
- + Located near downtown
- + Located near public open space
- + Bike trail travels adjacent to this site
- + Existing state of accessibility acceptable
- Located adjacent to industrial uses



2.2. Zoning code

There are three different zoning types for the sites addressed. These zone types are Commercial, Commercial/Light Industrial and Open Space. The goal of this project is to allow for the redevelopment of parcels in the downtown area without impacting existing zoning codes. While zoning changes were considered in order to accommodate the program proposal, all proposed uses will fall within either permitted or conditionally permitted uses for their respective zones.

2.3. Opportunities and constraints

Opportunities

All of the sites identified were selected because they are either vacant or abandoned, they are near enough to affect rail users, and they are **located within ½ mile of the downtown area of Santa Paula**. A ½ mile radius is a good standard for determining appropriate walking distance because it is the approximate distance a person would consider walking rather than driving. Of course this distance would need to take into account tree coverage and the general condition of the walking path among other factors, but this buffer provides an illustration for the future development of pedestrian paths that can create links for non-vehicular access to downtown.

While the train station parcel is itself considered open space, there is also **a small park located nearby** featuring several statues, a grass strip and a water feature. This open space is adjoined by a nearby bike trail, and ends at the 10th Street/Santa Barbara St. intersection.

Increased commuter and tourist rail traffic would be a **major economic generator for the Santa Paula downtown area**. Santa Paula is slated to become a feeder line for commuters and freight from Ventura and the Northern Los Angeles Area to Santa Clarita, according to Ken Brookes (Section 3.2.), and will connect with the proposed High Speed Rail line to the rest of the state. Once completed, this line will eliminate the need for freight from Port Hueneme in Ventura to go south to Los Angeles and then north again on the main line. Once the high speed rail line is constructed, Santa Paula will become an important rail thoroughfare to the primary statewide rail line.

Constraints

The train station is located at the corner of the intersection of 10th Street and Santa Barbara. **This is a major intersection in which traffic is impacted.** This can result in pedestrian crossing delays and can make trips from the train station or packinghouse to downtown difficult or dangerous.

Vacant Parcel #2 on Santa Barbara St. has a telephone line installed on the site. This line severely restricts the ability to develop this site, so it will primarily be utilized as a phase-2 expansion in a scenario where the rail tourism program becomes highly used and making the effort to relocate the line is economically viable (see Section 4.4.).

Assuming the high speed rail project is completed and rail traffic begins to freely flow through Santa Paula, **it is possible that heavy industry might start to return** to the City. At that point, the City would need to reassess their goals and consider whether an economy based on tourism or industry is better suited for the City.

3.0 INTERVIEWS

3.1. Ventura County Transportation Commission

Email communication with Vic Kamhi, Bus Transit Director at the Ventura County Transportation Commission, was conducted on May 14, 2012. In this communication, it was discovered that Santa Paula utilizes a Dial-a-Ride system for bus transit within the City. Kamhi stated that current ridership between the train station and downtown is likely to be low due to the close proximity of the two sites.

3.2. Chamber of Commerce

A phone interview was conducted with Ken Brookes, Manager at the Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce on May 16, 2012. Apart from information regarding the history of rail and current bus system in Santa Paula as detailed in Section 1.0., Brookes also provided more detailed information regarding community programs and the need for accommodations in the city.

According to Brookes, Santa Paula currently has successful tourist programs such as Cruise Night (which will be detailed in Section 4.2.) and he believes that increased rail tourism would only add to them.

However, until 10-15 years ago, the Fillmore & Western train runs were coordinated with the occurrence of these community events. While he was not sure of the reason for the termination of the coordinated runs, Brookes hypothesized that it was due to financial issues. Brookes then went on to identify accommodations as a potential need for the city. However, he noted that a problem with adding hotels is that during the year when there are no major events, these facilities may struggle.

3.3. Santa Paula Planning Department

A phone interview was conducted with Anna Arroyo, Assistant Planner at the Santa Paula Planning Department, on May 21, 2012. In this communication, she confirmed that a hotel at the Packinghouse site could be built under the existing zoning code as a “Commercial Service Business” as long as the structure remains under 10,000 sq. ft (see Section 4.4). A Commercial Service Business larger than 10,000 feet would require a conditional use permit to proceed.

In this interview, Arroyo also stated that no specific plan currently exists for uses on the sites identified in this program and there are also no current plans to relocate the Verizon-owned telephone lines on the Santa Barbara St. parcel. She also identified a gravel parking lot, located across from the train station and in front of the Agricultural Museum as a city-owned, public use lot; not specific to the train station or the museum. However, this lot is unmarked and its public-use status is somewhat ambiguous for visitors.

4.0 PROGRAM

4.1. Site uses

A summary of proposed site uses is as follows (details are located in Section 4.4.):

- 1 site - train station
- 1 site - hotel/farmers market
- 1 site - ready for commercial development
- 2 sites - reserved for future commercial development

The scale of this project was limited to existing conditions, and only addresses sites that are currently vacant or underutilized. A full tourism program of Santa Paula would need to address constant changes to the identity and makeup of the City, which is not possible to be accounted for in this report.

4.2. Attractors

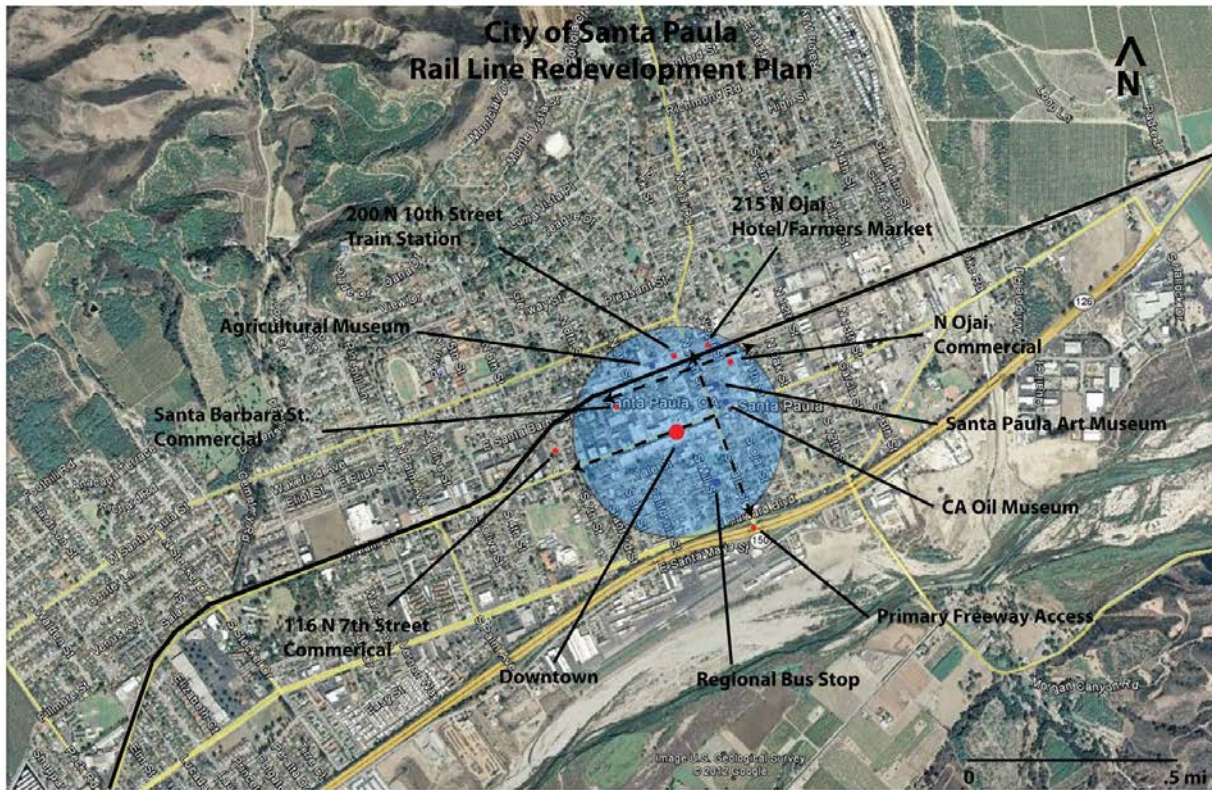
One of the most important attractors to Santa Paula is its existing successful community events. In particular “Cruise Night”, which takes place at the California Oil Museum, represents a popular and viable event to target for an increase in rail tourism to Santa Paula. This event is a car show hosted by the Santa Paula Police Officers Association. It features pre-1975 cars and is free for guests. This is a historic themed event and identifying this event as a trip attractor would be consistent with efforts to revive the historic train station for tourists to visit the City. This event occurs on the first Friday of every month and is in the downtown core, which is well within walking distance from the train station. It would likely be difficult to coordinate the proposed Ventura commuter service with this event, due to the fact that more runs would be required at night to accommodate visitor rail use, so Fillmore & Western would be the primary rail service for this venue.

4.3. Needs, goals and objectives

The following table illustrates the needs, goals and objectives of the primary stakeholders in Santa Paula. Inevitably, other stakeholders exist that have not been identified in this list, so any development of rail service would need to take account of other affected users.

Needs	
Chamber of Commerce	Increased rail use to Santa Paula
Ventura County Transportation Commission	Increased traffic with Ventura to county/state
Planning Department	
Fillmore & Western Railway Company	Increased rail use between Fillmore/Santa Paula
Public	Rail access to Ventura/Fillmore
Goals	
Chamber of Commerce	Make Santa Paula an attractive tourism destination
Ventura County Transportation Commission	Connect Ventura with county and state
Planning Department	Fill vacant parcels in the city
Fillmore & Western Railway Company	Have a successful business of tourism to Santa Paula
Public	Easy transit in/out of Santa Paula without a car
Objectives	
Chamber of Commerce	Manage economic growth of Santa Paula and oversee growth of rail programs
Ventura County Transportation Commission	Link all forms of transit to create an easy multi-modal system
Planning Department	Keep Santa Paula's historic character but also encourage growth
Fillmore & Western Railway Company	Maximize success of tourism program
Public	Easy non-vehicular regional and local transportation

4.4. Program plan



This image illustrates the proposals of this project in addition to a 0.5 mile buffer around the downtown area to illustrate the proximity of these sites. Major attractors such as nearby museums and the regional bus stop have also been included.

The following table classifies important data for these sites:

	Acres	Sq Feet	Zone	Current Use
200 N 10th	1.33	57934.80	Open Space	Train Station
215 N Ojai	2.12	92347.20	Commercial/Light Industrial	Packinghouse
116 N 7th	0.22	9583.20	Commercial	Vacant
Santa Barbara St	0.36	15681.60	Commercial	Vacant
N Ojai	0.17	7405.20	Commercial	Vacant
Total	4.2	182952.00		

200 N 10th Street

Use: Train Station

Zoning Code: Open Space

Phase: Existing

Size: 57,934 sq. ft.

Why: The centerpiece of this effort to increase rail passenger traffic in Santa Paula.



215 N Ojai

Use: Hotel/Farmers Market

Zoning Code: Commercial/Light Industrial

Phase: 2

Size: 92,347 sq. ft.

Why: Commercial/Light Industrial zoning codes currently permit “Commercial Service Business” structures up to 10,000 sq. ft. Structures of this type larger than 10,000 sq. ft. require a conditional use permit. It is recommended that a farmer’s market facility could be housed in the packinghouse structure because it is a large, indoor open space that reflects Santa Paula’s history, and it also takes advantage of the nearby rail pull-out. A temporary use permit would be required to begin the process of this use. The hotel building and amenities could be constructed on the rest of the 2.12 acre site in phases based on user demand. The initial phase could begin with at 10,000 sq. ft. structure to maximize the acceptable use, and expansions could be made under conditional use as demand increases.



This image is an interior shot of the packinghouse to illustrate its size. The property is owned by Rimo Storage & Property Management, however the contact information listed on the buildings appears to no longer be in service.

116 N 7th Street – Vacant Parcel #1

Use: Future commercial development

Zoning Code: Commercial

Phase: 2

Size: 9,583 sq. ft.

Why: This site is currently located in the middle of a residential neighborhood. In a scenario where rail tourism expands in Santa Paula and downtown seeks to grow, this is a site with potential, however until that point it is not reasonable to construct a home and then remove it to install a commercial unit.

Empty parcel at Santa Barbara St. and Davis St. – Vacant Parcel #2

Use: Future commercial development

Zoning Code: Commercial

Phase: 2

Size: 15,681 sq. ft.

Why: The phone lines installed on this site pose a major obstacle to development. If it is ever economically viable to utilize this parcel and relocate the lines, then a full scale project can be proposed on this site, however until that point the only reasonable proposal possible is a duplex unit which avoids the lines.



Empty parcel at Santa Barbara St. and N Ojai – Vacant Parcel #3

Use: Commercial development

Zoning Code: Commercial

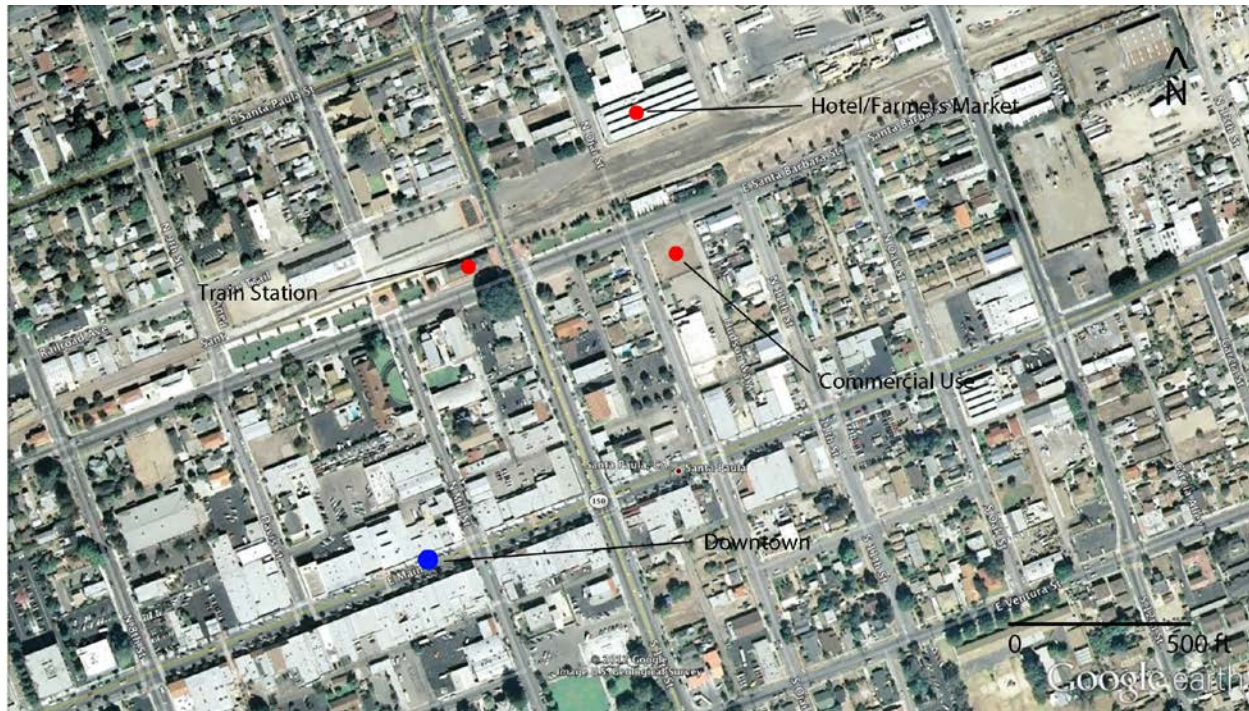
Phase: 1

Size: 7,405 sq. ft.

Why: This site is located across the train tracks from the packinghouse, and one block away from the train station. It is a site with potential to form links with these two nearby structures and could provide services or amenities to rail passengers stopping in Santa Paula or bicycle riders passing by on the nearby bike path. However, the site is bisected from those two structures by the rail line and the congested 10th Street/Santa Barbara St. intersection and pedestrian links would need to be improved for this site to be successful.

The following images illustrate the close proximity of the Packinghouse and Vacant Parcel #3. The Packinghouse is in the far left corner of the image, and the edge of the N Ojai site is visible in the far right corner of the image.





4.5. Transportation plan

The primary mode of transportation in this plan is walking. The Santa Paula train station is close enough to the downtown core to directly affect it without requiring buses or cars. A person who arrives in Santa Paula by rail will be able to walk to the proposed hotel at the packinghouse site or to downtown if pedestrian paths and traffic calming measures are improved to accommodate an increase in use in this area. Bicycle paths are already established in this area as well so it would also be easy to travel through an extended section of the city by bike. Travel throughout the city is also possible via bus. The existing Dial-a-Ride system should be sufficient to support an early phase of ridership growth, however, as inflow of rail passengers increases, the Ventura County Transportation Commission should be prepared to accommodate, and develop a plan for a regular shuttle service accordingly.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. Phase details

The context of this project is a specific plan for currently vacant sites adjacent to the railroad in downtown Santa Paula. This means that most actions are taken by private developers who would be working in cooperation with the larger vision of tourism in Santa Paula in mind. This means that very few actions would be taken by city departments, except to be the guiding force which drives and assists the development plan. The following phases detail actions to be taken by various stakeholders that affect rail in Santa Paula. Additional actions which would further the development of rail tourism in Santa Paula would need to be accounted for as development continues.

Phase 1 – Can do now (<5 years)

- Build Commercial structure at Vacant Parcel #3
- Consider relocating Vacant Parcel #2 telephone lines for a permanent Commercial use
- Construct signage for Ag Museum/Train Station parking lot
- Link Fillmore & Western train schedule with local events
- Propose traffic calming measures for 10th Street/Santa Barbara St. intersection

Phase 2 – Can do when VCTC service begins (Approx. 5-10 years)

- Build dual use Hotel/Farmers Market at Packinghouse parcel
- Build Commercial structure at Vacant Parcel #1
- Build Commercial structure at Vacant Parcel #2
- Add additional night trains linking to both Ventura and Fillmore
- Improve pedestrian links from Train Station and Packinghouse to Downtown and Vacant Parcel #3
- VCTC should conduct analysis to determine if bus service should be expanded

Phase 3 – Can do when linked to HSR (Approx. >10 years)

- Expand Hotel
- City must decide whether to focus expansion efforts on tourism or industry

5.2. Recommendations

- Fillmore & Western Railway Company must cooperate with Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce to maximize tourism potential and link with community events taking place in Santa Paula
- Traffic congestion problems in the 10th Street/Santa Barbara St. area must be alleviated for any rail program to be successful
- Pedestrian paths must be established to link Commercial uses and Train Station to Downtown
- Parking lot at the Agricultural Museum/Train Station should add signage indicating that it is a public-use parking lot to eliminate possible confusion
- Begin process to move telephone lines off of Vacant Parcel #2. These lines hamper any significant attempt to construct commercial units on this site
- Add additional night trains to proposed commuter train to allow for improved tourism ridership flow from Ventura and Fillmore

This program will create redevelopment of the downtown Santa Paula area if rail use increases as infrastructure is developed. The short term financial issues as well as currently low rail use will limit the initial phases of development, however once infrastructure is installed, Santa Paula will face a growth of both passenger and industrial rail use. Even though no timetable currently exists for either the High Speed Rail line's completion or the implementation of the Ventura-Santa Clarita line, Santa Paula should prepare for the eventuality of a return to increased rail use in the Santa Clara River Valley.

Appendix

6.0 APPENDIX

6.1. Parcel reports

6.2. Full size maps

6.2.1. Vacant Parcels map

6.2.2. Program map

7.0 CONTACT INFO

8.0 RESOURCES



County View

Parcel Report

Train Station

APN	APN Suffix	Document Date	Document Number	Tract Number	Map Number	Situs Number	Situs Direction	Situs Street	Situs Suffix	Acreage
103007601	5	19951031	950131252			200	N	TENTH	ST	1.33

Packinghouse

APN	APN Suffix	Document Date	Document Number	Tract Number	Map Number	Situs Number	Situs Direction	Situs Street	Situs Suffix	Acreage
101016309	5	20111121	110176734			221	N	OJAI	ST	2.12

Vacant Parcel #1

APN	APN Suffix	Document Date	Document Number	Tract Number	Map Number	Situs Number	Situs Direction	Situs Street	Situs Suffix	Acreage
103008216	5	19960925	960131450		003MR 028	116	N	SEVENTH	ST	.22

Vacant Parcel #2

APN	APN Suffix	Document Date	Document Number	Tract Number	Map Number	Situs Number	Situs Direction	Situs Street	Situs Suffix	Acreage
103010124	5	20060320	060057928		3 MR 28			SANTA BARBARA	ST	0.36

Vacant Parcel #3

APN	APN Suffix	Document Date	Document Number	Tract Number	Map Number	Situs Number	Situs Direction	Situs Street	Situs Suffix	Acreage
101021116	5	19940309	940040483		005MR 015					.17

City of Santa Paula Vacant Parcels Adjacent to Rail Line



**200 N 10th Street
Train Station**

**215 N Ojai
Packinghouse**

**N Ojai
Vacant Parcel**

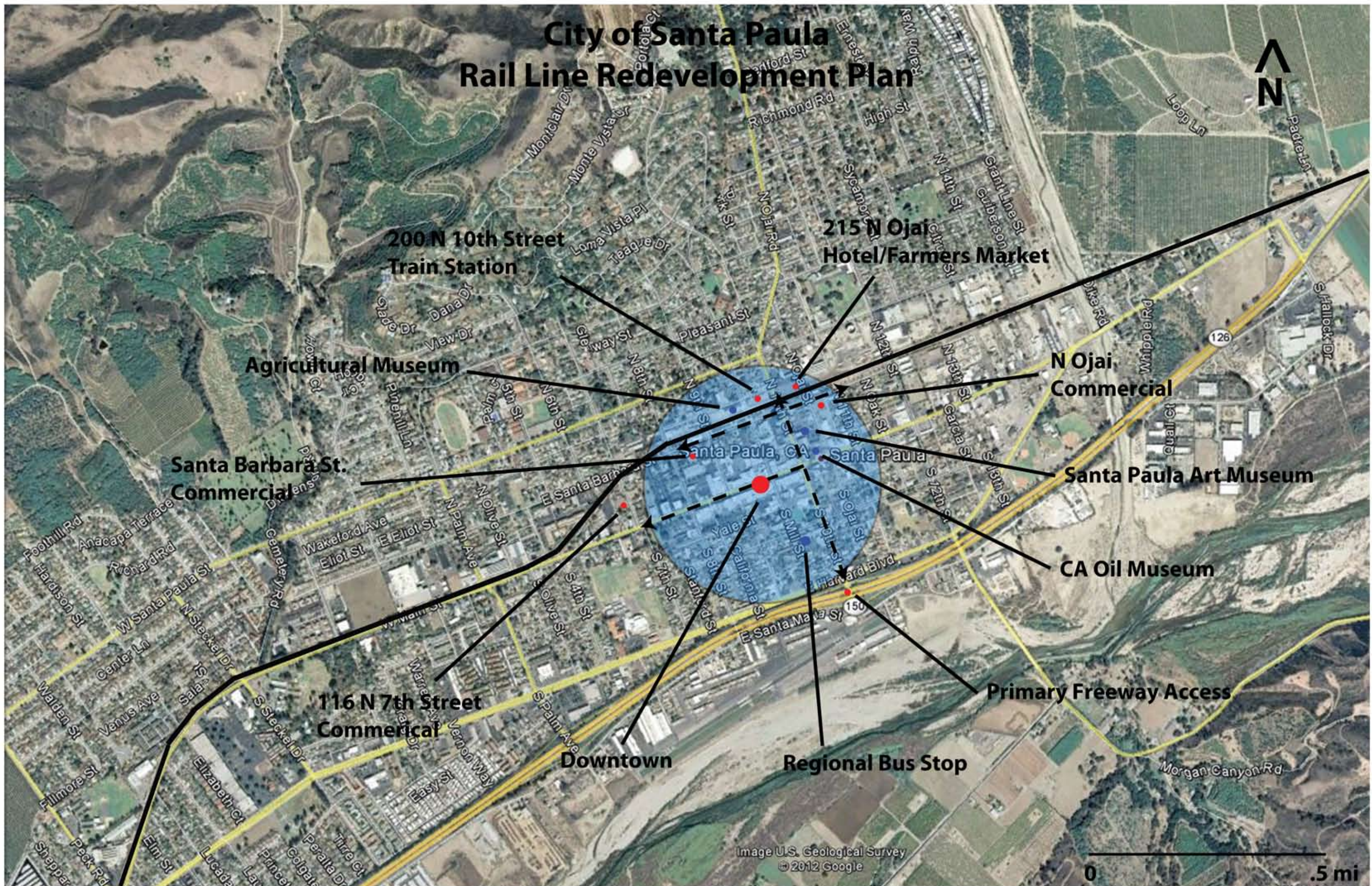
**Santa Barbara St.
Vacant Parcel**

**116 N 7th Street
Vacant Parcel**

Downtown

Primary Freeway Access

City of Santa Paula Rail Line Redevelopment Plan



200 N 10th Street
Train Station

215 N Ojai
Hotel/Farmers Market

Agricultural Museum

N Ojai
Commercial

Santa Barbara St.
Commercial

Santa Paula Art Museum

CA Oil Museum

116 N 7th Street
Commercial

Downtown

Regional Bus Stop

Primary Freeway Access

7.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce
Ken Brookes, Manager
805.525.5561
ken@santapaulachamber.com

Ventura County Transportation Commission
Vic Kamhi, Bus Transit Director
805.642.1591 Ext: 110
vkamhi@goventura.org

Santa Paula Planning Department
Anna Arroyo, Assistant Planner
805.933.4214 Ext. 214
AArroyo@spcity.org

Fillmore & Western Railway Company
Rick Bleak, Signal Department
805.524.0330
rick@fwry.com

"Buy Local" Senior Project Program
Matthew Dito, CRP 463
Spring 2012
mdito25@gmail.com

8.0 RESOURCES

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