

Ardie Barnett

From: Buster, Bob [BBUSTER@rcbos.org]
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2006 3:13 PM
To: Robert Phillips
Subject: RE: METROLINK

Mr. Phillips:

The second part of my proposal, which I will spell out in another op-ed soon, is to provide Perris-Riverside commuter service for the next five to ten years by Bus Rapid Transit or BRT. These are the high-tech, high-speed, attractive coaches that are jammed with commuters now on Wilshire and Ventura boulevards in L.A. and San Fernando Valley. Separate lanes next to the median on the 215 Freeway here are already planned to be constructed, which BRT can use. BRT is completely flexible as to routes and schedules and operates at less than half the cost of Metrolink trains. BRT improvements on a Perris Line cost only \$10 million. BRT obviously has minimal noise or safety problems for existing communities. If BRT takes University Ave. or Martin Luther King off the freeway to go to the Downtown Metrolink Station, it will serve UCR much better.

Train service on the Perris Line should not be started until grade separations are in place in the highest priority Riverside and all grade crossing in the University and Hunter Park areas. Indeed, this line should be completely rethought as a San Bernardino-Riverside-Perris (with side service to Hemet-San Jacinto)-Temecula mass transit corridor. BRT can serve it best first. Train service would commence only when, hopefully, two-way ridership justifies it and grade separations and other noise reduction and safety improvements are in place. Rather than luring future residents to live in the mid-county and attempt 100 minute to 130 minute commutes each way to Orange County and L.A., we should be reinforcing our own inland area transportation to provide closer local trips to work.

That would also cancel any need for stations in the already cramped University and Hunter Park areas, where impacts on existing neighborhoods will be severe. Highgrove is the right place for a regional, intermodal station, at the junction of the main rail lines and 215 Freeway. Highgrove still has ample land and the community and Grand Terrace want the station.

I've been meeting with every City of Riverside Councilmember, the Chambers of Commerce, UC Riverside reps. from the Chancellor's Office, and our State Assemblymen and Senators about my proposal. I've still got a few left to talk to, but, so far, everyone is very favorable. Getting Mayor Loveridge and Supervisors Tavaglione and Ashley "on board" is important. I think it's possible to build enough support to turn Mr. Haley around and then go and lobby our Congressional reps. (Calvert mainly) to make some sense of how ample federal transportation dollars are spent here.

Your writing the Mayor, both Supervisors, and Cong. Calvert to tell them what you told me will help a great deal.

Bob Buster, Supv., 1st District

From: Robert Phillips [mailto:raphillips129@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2006 11:07 AM
To: Buster, Bob
Cc: Btully@rcbos.org
Subject: METROLINK

Dear Supervisor Buster:

I wholeheartedly support your drive to redirect funds for the Perris Valley Metrolink line to more

immediate and important uses, i.e., grade separations and enhanced bus service. I cannot count the hours of my life that have been wasted on Iowa Avenue, Columbia Avenue, Third Street, and elsewhere as I waited while trains performed seemingly endless switching maneuvers. Eliminating this problem will benefit far more people than Metrolink service will.

I have lived at 3511 Watkins Drive (at the corner of Valencia Hill Drive, along the east edge of UCR) since 1984. My house is across the street from the proposed location of a Metrolink platform. The traffic in my neighborhood is already awful, and the last thing we need is a train platform, with its associated vehicular and pedestrian traffic, noise, and air pollution from idling engines. The primary purpose of the platform would supposedly be to serve commuters coming to and from UCR, but it would not be near the academic center of campus; instead, it would be near intramural athletic fields, maintenance yards, and student apartments (and the people at these facilities are already on the campus). Pedestrians accessing or leaving the platform would have to cross Watkins Drive, a wide, busy, and often congested street. This would inevitably result in serious vehicle-versus-pedestrian accidents, since UCR's students, as a whole, don't seem to know how to look for traffic before crossing a street. (If you don't believe me, just drive around the campus for a few minutes and watch them as they plunge headlong into crosswalks or jaywalk without ever looking at anything but the ground directly in front of them.) UCR, with its rampant expansion and complete lack of concern for its surrounding community, does plenty to denigrate the quality of life for me and my neighbors. A train platform on Watkins Drive would just make things worse.

While I'm bending your ear, I feel compelled to mention what a disservice Eric Haley does to RCTC. His arrogant, bullying behavior at our University Neighborhood Association meeting a few months ago was appalling and certainly did nothing to engender support for RCTC and its plans. When Letitia Pepper, on her best behavior, calmly asked him a reasonable question, he cut her off in mid-sentence and launched into a stream of personal insults. Then he accused her of being nasty and argumentative, when, in fact, she had done nothing of the sort. I have seen him at several community meetings, and it is his practice to interrupt, shout at, and insult anyone who expresses an opinion not in accordance with his.

Again, thanks for pushing to divert the Metrolink funds to more productive uses. And thanks for listening.

Robert Phillips
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