Coachella Rail Station Feasibility Study and Integrated Land Use and Transit Network

Technical Advisory Committee – Meeting 2

January 30, 2025

Agenda

- Introductions
- Study Purpose and Process Update
- TAC Role / Community Engagement
- Evaluation Factors
- Evaluation Results
- Discussion – Preliminary Site Recommendation
- Next Steps

Study Purposes

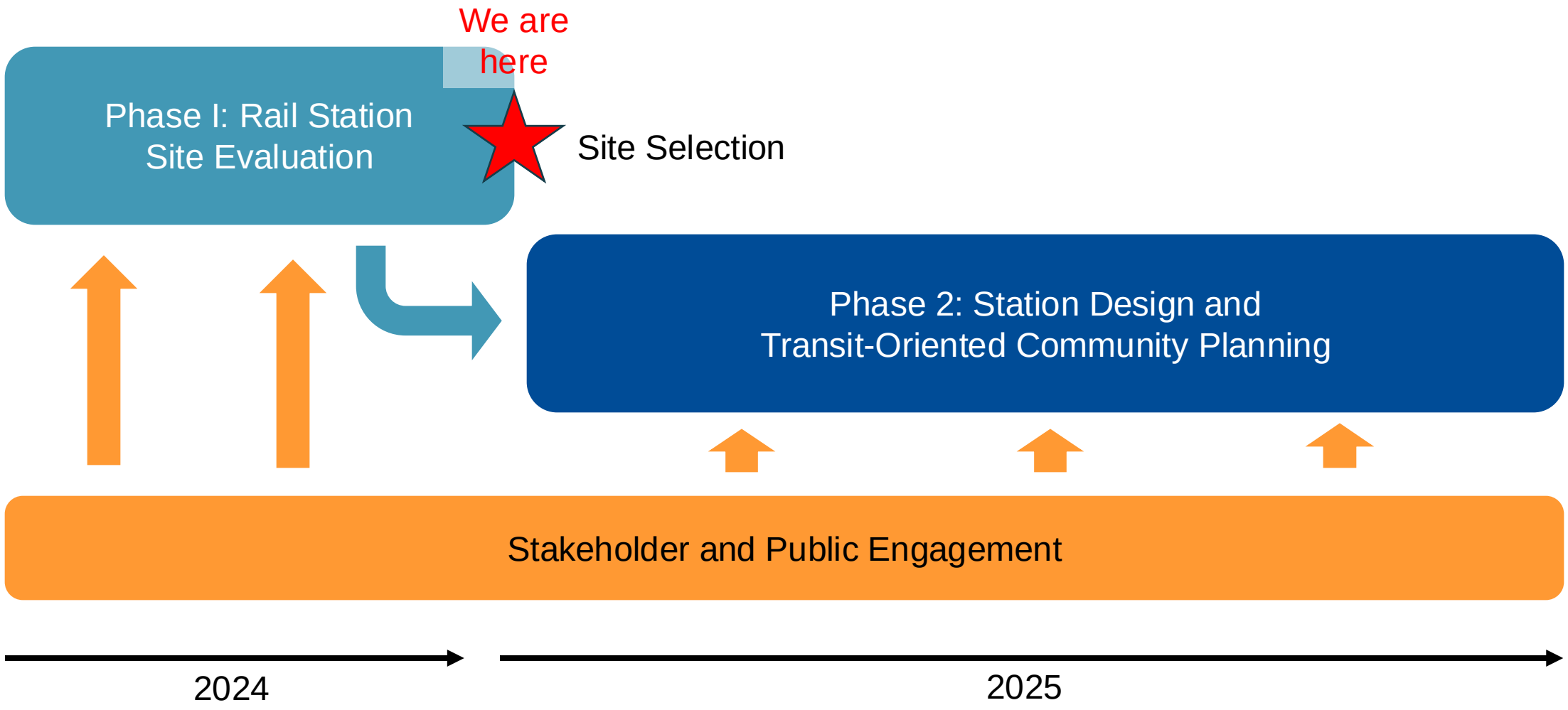
- Evaluate potential locations for CV Rail station site and layover facility in Coachella
- Select the City's preferred station location
- For the preferred location, develop:
  - Preliminary engineering plans, architectural drawings, and connectivity plans for the rail station
  - Transit-oriented community plans and economic development strategies for the surrounding area

CV Rail and the Coachella Station Study

- Final selection of the preferred alternative and final station locations will be determined in the NEPA/CEQA CV Rail Tier II/Project Environmental Document[1]
- Analysis and information in this study will be utilized to help determine the final selection of the preferred alternative during formal NEPA/CEQA process
- Location of tracks for CV Rail are subject to negotiations and agreements with the host railroad
- This study does not commit the City to the approval or construction of any particular station location

1. Led by RCTC under the oversight of the Federal Railroad Administration and Caltrans Division of Rail.

Study Process



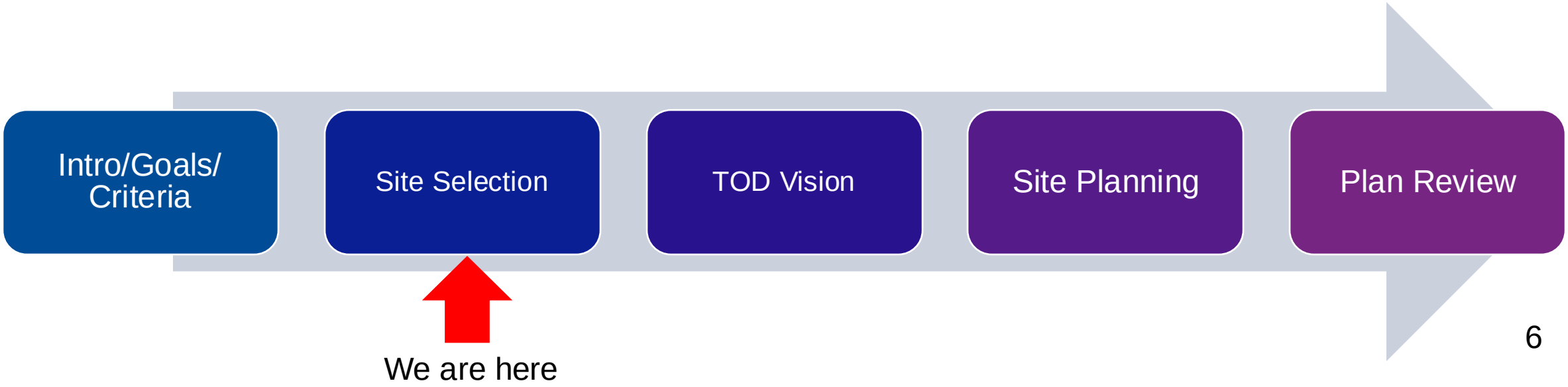
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Role

Role

- Help guide the study
- Attend quarterly meetings
- Review recommendations
- Provide forum for coordination

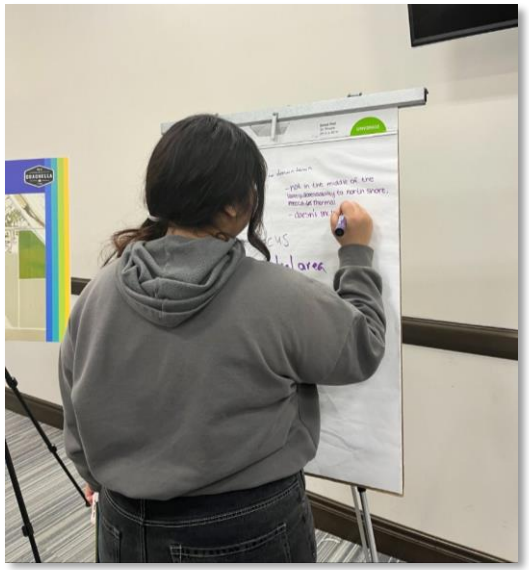
Input we seek throughout the study

- Known issues
- Local perspective
- Potential challenges
- Potential opportunities



Community Engagement

- First TAC meeting October 24, 2024
- Community Workshop November 21, 2024 – 32 attendees
- Online follow-up survey was available through December 20, 2024 – 72 responses



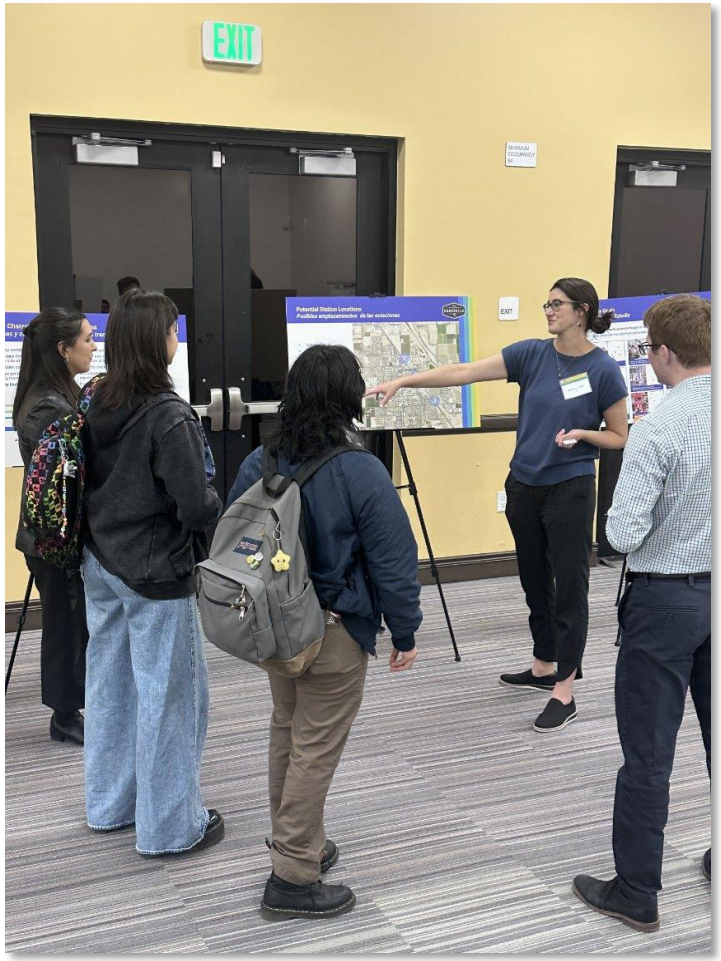
Notification Campaign

Community Meeting

- *Digital Methods:*
  - 4 Project Database E-Blasts
  - 4 Social Media Posts (Facebook & Instagram)
- *Extended Outreach Toolkit:*
  - Distributed to 67 key stakeholders including:
    - Community organizations
    - Businesses
    - Tribal groups
    - Educational institutions
    - Coachella Chamber of Commerce
- *Flyer Distribution*
  - Focused on local public counters to boost visibility and community participation

Additional Survey Notification

- *Digital Methods:*
  - 2 Project Database E-Blasts
  - 2 Social Media Posts (Facebook & Instagram)



Input on Goals and Priorities

Results from Community Workshop and online survey

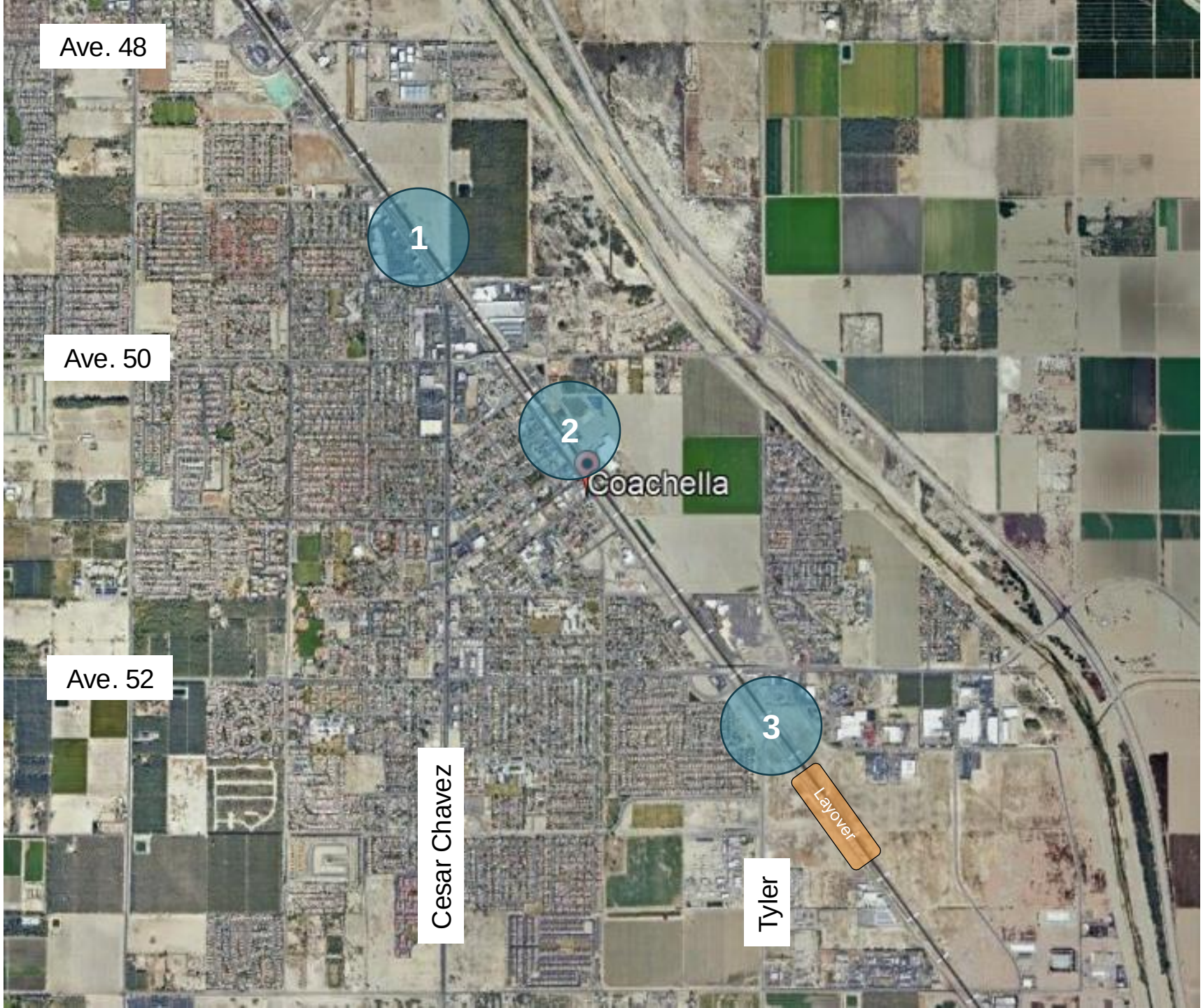
Study Goal	Responses
Provide More Transportation Choices	56
Economic Development	39
Reduce Driving/Emissions	39
Quality of Life	38
Equitable Access	24
Multimodal Connectivity	15
Sustainability	12
Housing & Transit Oriented Design	12
Maintain Rail System Performance	10
Minimize Rail Impacts	6
Other (open ended)	-Work with other cities -Parking around the station -Ensuring the ticket price is affordable

Station Site Selection Process

1. Collaboratively develop goals and evaluation criteria to determine a preferred site
2. Identify **up to three** potential station locations to evaluate
3. Analyze existing conditions for each station site
4. Analyze sites according to evaluation criteria
5. Present results and recommend a preferred location

Potential Station Locations

1. Gateway Center
2. Pueblo Viejo
3. Tyler Street



Evaluation Factors Discussed at First TAC Meeting and Community Workshop

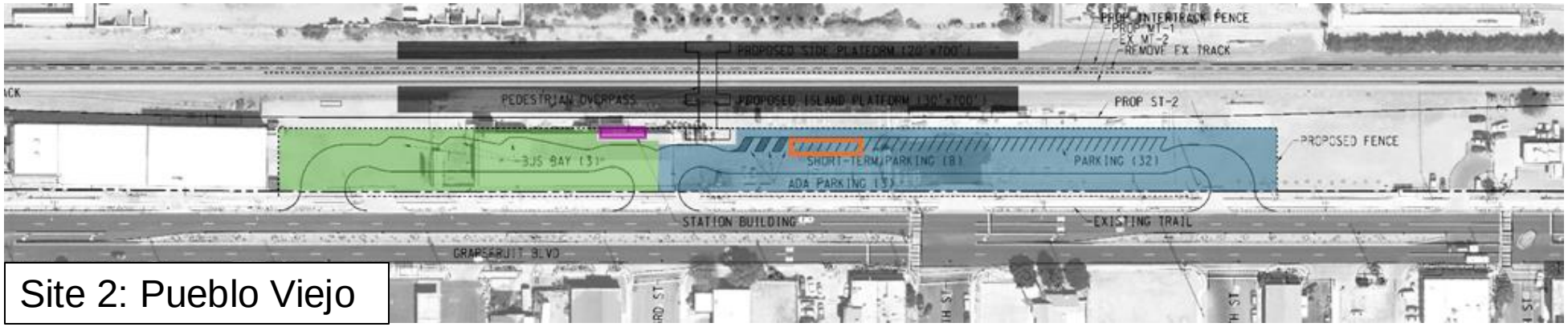
Rail engineering feasibility	• Physical constraints • Operational constraints
Land use/development compatibility	• Consistency with plans and policies • Potential for transit-oriented development • Economic development potential
Environmental constraints	• Biological/cultural resources • Geotechnical conditions
Accessibility/connectivity	• Bike/pedestrian • Transit • Auto
Equity and Environmental Justice	• Station area demographics • Potential for benefits/impacts
Ridership potential	• Existing/planned population/employment • Key generators
Costs	• Capital • Maintenance

Refined Site Evaluation Criteria

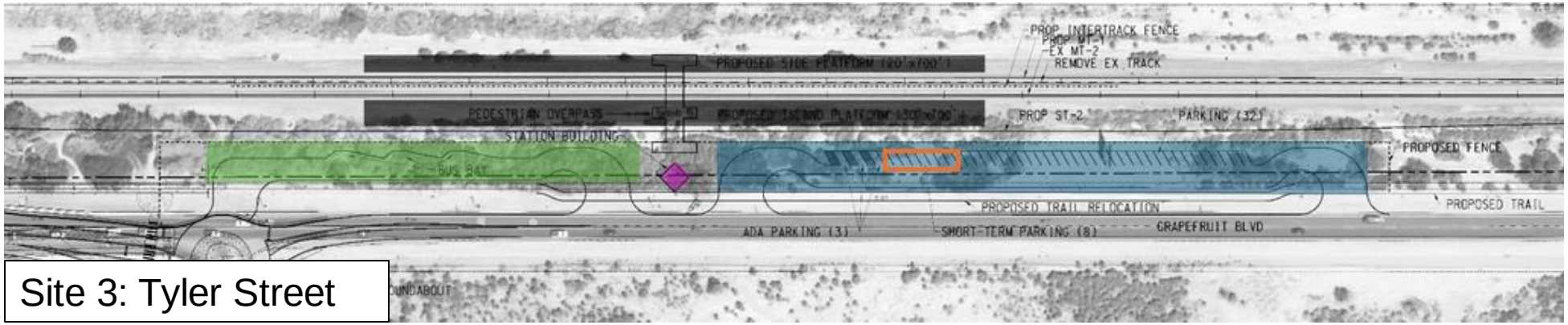
Category	Evaluation Factor
Rail engineering feasibility	Physical constraints (accommodate new track and platform edges on all tracks)
	Operational constraints
	Flexibility in layover site options
Station element feasibility	Station Building (500 sf)
	Parking (32 regular stalls + 2 ADA stalls)
	Bus Bays (minimum of 2)
	Pick-up/Drop-off (8 short-term parking stalls)
Land use/development compatibility	Consistency with plans and policies
	Potential for transit-oriented development
	Economic development potential
Environmental constraints	Biological resources
	Cultural resources
	Hazardous materials
	Geotechnical conditions
	Flooding risk
Accessibility/connectivity	Pedestrian connectivity
	Bicycle connectivity
	Transit connectivity
	Auto connectivity
	Crossing potential
Equity and Environmental Justice	Station area demographics
	Community and business impacts
Ridership potential	Existing/planned population/employment
	Key generators
Costs	Capital
	Maintenance
	ROW/land acquisition

Potential Site Layouts – for Evaluation Purposes Only

Site 1: Gateway



Site 2: Pueblo Viejo

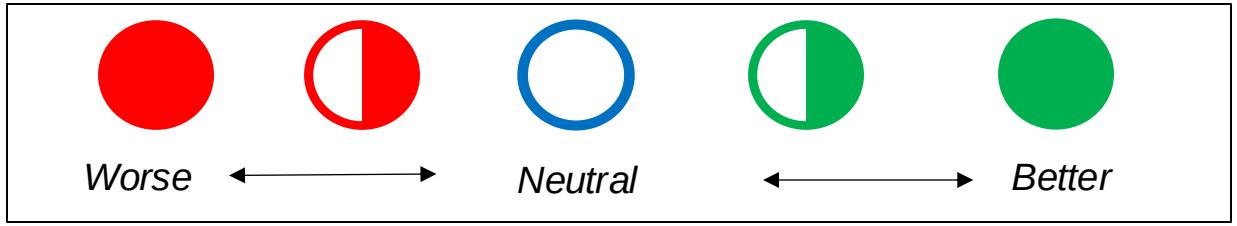


Site 3: Tyler Street

- Platforms
- Station Building
- Bus Bays
- Parking
- Pick-up/Drop-Off

Evaluation Results - Rail Engineering Feasibility

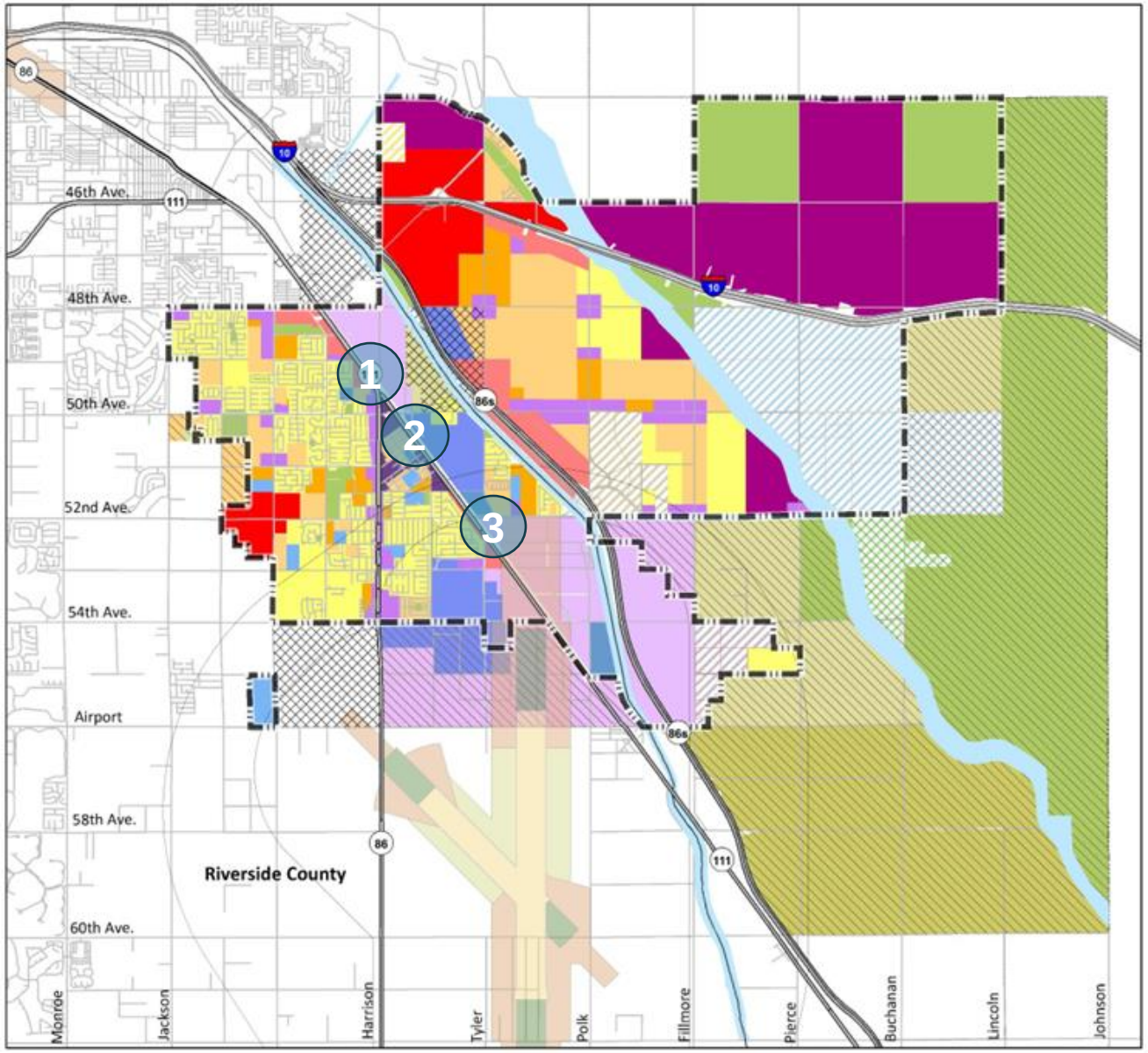
Evaluation Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Justification
Physical Constraints				All sites can accommodate a third track and platform edges on all tracks. Site 1 leaves very limited room to meet the other minimum criteria, with no room for expansion.
Operational Constraints				All sites support planned intercity operations. Depending on placement of the layover facility, Site 3 may have more complex movement between the station and facility.
Flexibility in Layover Site Options				Accessing the maintenance/layover facility from 2 of the 3 platform edges at Site 3 will require additional crossovers and signals, or the layover facility would need to be placed north of the existing crossover.
Overall				



Evaluation Results – Station Element Feasibility

Evaluation Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Justification
Station Building				All sites can fit a 500 square foot building.
Parking				Site 1 the most constrained of the three, with approximately 75 feet of land between Grapefruit Blvd and the existing railroad tracks. Sites 2 and 3 have more available land.
Bus Bays				Bus bays can't be accommodated on Site 1 due to the limited land. Bus bays can be accommodated on Sites 2 and 3.
Pick-up/drop-off zone				All sites can accommodate pick up and drop space within the right of way, but Site 1 constraints result in longer walking distances for passengers.
Overall				

Site Locations and Land Use



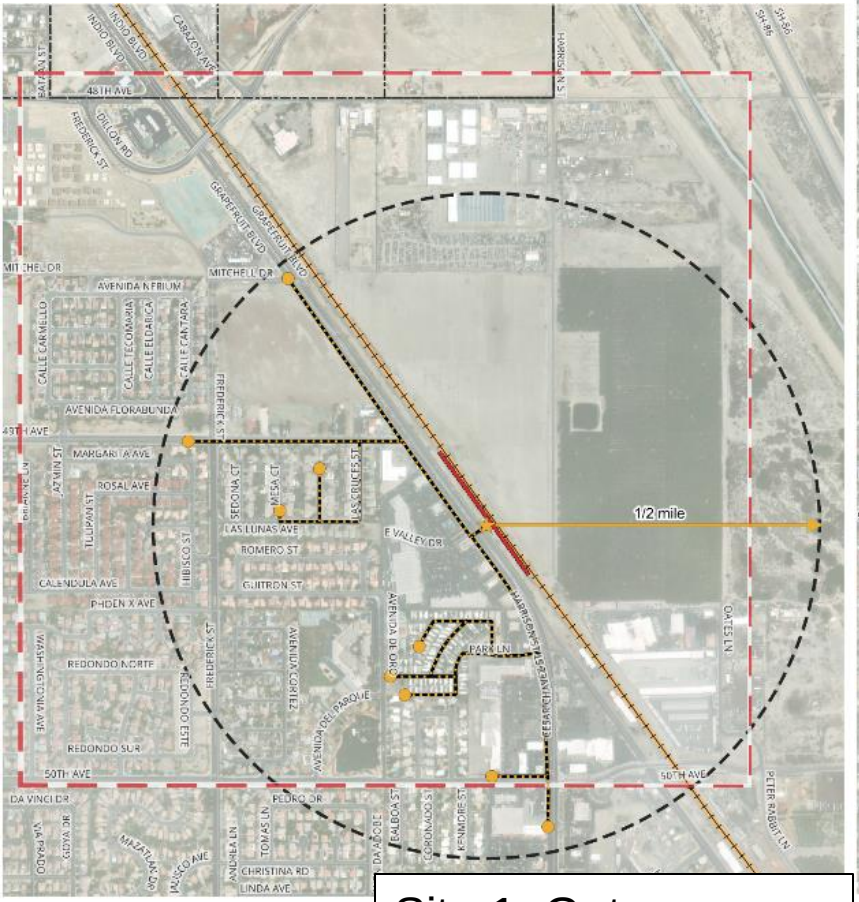
Evaluation Results – Land Use/Development Compatibility

Evaluation Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Justification
Consistency with local plans and policies	◑	●	○	Site 1 has little potential for TOD under current land use designations. Site 2 is consistent with the city's general plan. Site 3 has more open space but is not currently designated for uses that support a rail station.
Potential for transit-oriented development	◑	●	○	Commercial uses around Site 1 are unlikely to redevelop, and land to the east is zoned industrial. The Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan supports mixed-use development around Site 2. Most vacant land around Site 3 is zoned industrial, and development could pull focus from central Coachella.
Potential for economic development	●	●	○	Sites 1 and 2 have a higher share of commercial zoning in the surrounding 1/4-mile.
Overall	◑	●	○	

Evaluation Results – Environmental Constraints

Evaluation Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Justification
Biological resources	○	○	○	None of the sites are located within or adjacent to conservation areas.
Cultural resources	◑	◑	○	Site 1 and Site 3 were identified as having a medium sensitivity for historic resources. Site 2 was identified as having a potentially high sensitivity level for historic resources. Site 1 adjacent to tribal land.
Hazardous materials	○	○	○	None of the sites are identified on a hazardous materials site database.
Geotechnical conditions	○	○	○	Geotechnical conditions are similar amongst the sites.
Noise/vibration	◑	◑	●	Site 1 and Potential Site 2 are located near potential sensitive noise receivers (school/educational center).
Flooding	○	○	○	None of the sites are mapped within FEMA flood hazard zones.
Overall	◑	◑	○	

Site Access



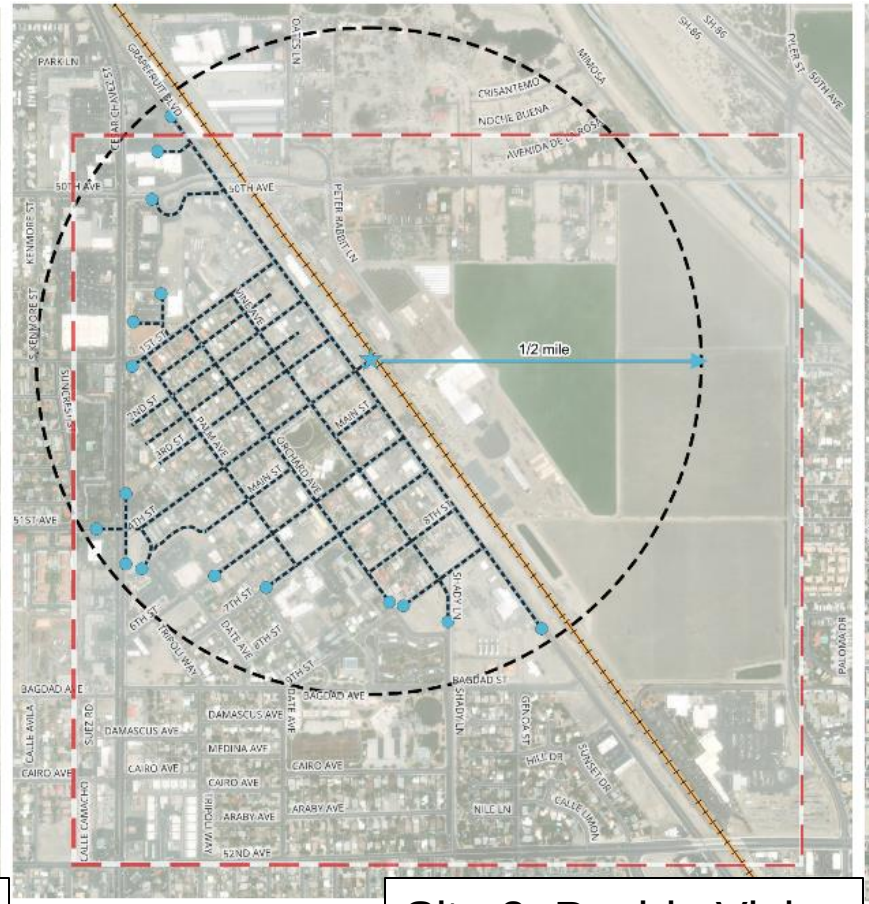
Site 1: Gateway

Station Area 1. Walking Distance Diagram

Train Station. Site 1

Path of a 1/2 mile walking/biking distance for Train Station Site 1

0 0,25 0,5 mi



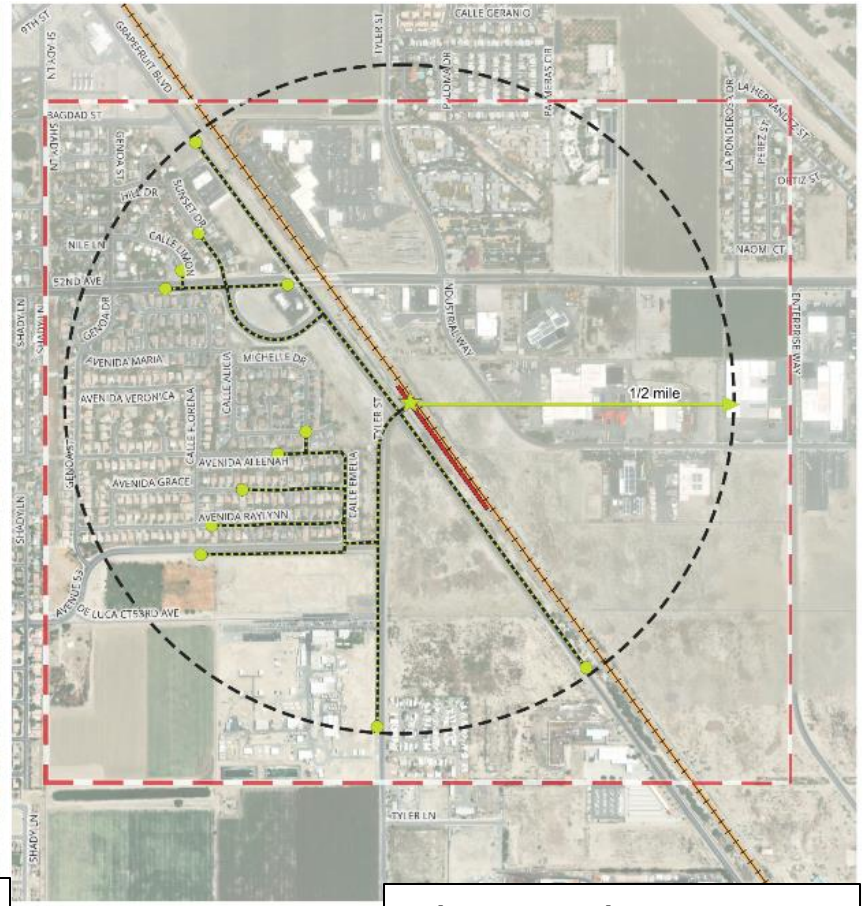
Site 2: Pueblo Viejo

Station Area 2. Walking Distance Diagram

Train Station. Site 2

Path of a 1/2 mile walking/biking distance for Train Station Site 2

0 0,25 0,5 mi



Site 3: Tyler Street

Station Area 3. Walking Distance Diagram

Train Station. Site 3

Path of a 1/2 mile walking/biking distance for Train Station Site 3

0 0,25 0,5 mi

Evaluation Results – Access/Connectivity

Evaluation Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Justification
Pedestrian connectivity				Site 1 is walkable to several retail centers. The street grid and mix of uses in Pueblo Viejo are highly conducive to walking to Site 2. Site 3 has very little within walking distance.
Bicycle connectivity				All sites will have north-south bicycle access via Grapefruit Blvd. Site 1 has bicycle access to Cesar Chavez. Site 2 is bikeable from most of the city. Site 3 has the least development within cycling distance.
Transit connectivity				Site 1 has existing transit service and Site 2 is approximately 2000 feet from the Coachella Transit Hub. Site 3 has no bus routes nearby
Auto connectivity				Site 2 is the second closest to major arterials but provides excellent access to two east-west arterials. Site 3 is the furthest from major roadways but has the lowest incidence of crashes nearby.
Crossing potential				Sites 1 and 3 have minimal development on the east. Site 2 could connect Pueblo Viejo to the future Community Resilience Center as well as other uses on Peter Rabbit Lane.
Overall				

Evaluation Results – Equity and Environmental Justice

Evaluation Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Justification
Station area demographics				All sites in disadvantaged communities. Site 2 has the highest CalEnviroScreen 4.0 score, and highest percentage of population living 2x below the federal poverty level.
Community and business impacts				All businesses within the right of way will be impacted by the construction of the third main track, regardless of station site. For Site 2, the spaces needed for the platform and track flare would impact two existing structures. Sites 1 and 3 have no buildings directly conflicting with the station elements.
Overall				

Evaluation Results – Ridership Potential

Evaluation Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Justification
Planned population/employment				Based on planned land uses, the number of people expected to be present in the area around Site 2 is about double that in around Sites 1 and 3.
Key generators				Sites 1 and 2 have a larger number of businesses in the surrounding 1/2-mile radius.
Overall				

Evaluation Results – Estimated Costs

Evaluation Factor	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Justification
Capital Costs	○	○	◑	Site 3 would require placement of the maintenance facility slightly further south, and likely need new crossovers between the maintenance facility and the station.
Maintenance costs	○	○	◑	As noted above, Site 3 would require additional track length and crossovers that would need to be maintained.
ROW/land acquisition	●	◑	●	Vacant land is available on the east side of Sites 1 and 3. Site 1 is severely limited by available space between Grapefruit Blvd and the tracks. Site 1 would displace at least one existing use. Site 2 would impact or displace at least 2 existing uses. Site 3 is vacant land.
Overall	◑	○	◑	

Community Input on Site 1

Advantages

- Close to public transportation connections
- Near downtown and commercial areas
- High-traffic area, which could be advantageous for accessibility
- Located close to schools and neighborhoods

Concerns

- High traffic volumes may create safety issues for pedestrians
- Not very walkable
- Safety concerns for agricultural workers
- Crime and homelessness in the area
- Not close enough to downtown, Main St., or Sixth St.
- Potential quality of life impacts on surrounding uses such as elementary school or mobile home park

Community Input on Site 2

Advantages

- Central downtown location with easy access to stores, restaurants, and response center
- Potential to energize a historically significant area
- Could boost the small local business economy
- Walkable area with existing foot traffic
- Accessible for seniors, pedestrians and nearby housing
- Close to public transit connections
- Safe and convenient with better lighting and public visibility

Concerns

- Potential traffic congestion in busy area could lead to pedestrian safety issues
- Noise and congestion impacts to nearby residential areas
- Safety concerns due to crime in the area and vehicle security
- Impact on local businesses and competition for space in the area, could raise rents

Community Input on Site 3

Advantages

- Good location for future development with plenty of space for the station, parking, and expansion
- Could help improve economic development in a less developed area and create jobs
- Closer to unincorporated communities like Mecca, Thermal, and Oasis
- More space for a transfer station with buses
- Safer and less congested compared to other sites, potentially reducing risks for pedestrians and vehicles

Concerns

- Remote location that may pull focus away from downtown and portions of eastern Coachella Valley
- Limited connection to other areas
- Not within walking distance of businesses, making it less convenient for pedestrians
- Concerns about safety due to its remoteness and potential for accidents, especially with busy streets nearby
- Far from public transit connections like buses, making it less convenient for users who rely on multiple forms of transportation

Evaluation Results – Combined

Category	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
Rail engineering feasibility			
Station element feasibility			
Land use/development compatibility			
Environmental constraints			
Accessibility/connectivity			
Equity and Environmental Justice			
Ridership potential			
Costs			

Discussion – Preliminary Site Recommendation

Category	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
Overall feasibility			

Preliminary site recommendation to carry forward into Phase 2

Next Steps

- Planning Commission and City Council presentations on site recommendation (February 2025)
- Community workshop in March focused on community planning/visioning for preferred station area
- Third TAC meeting in early Spring 2025