

Coachella Rail Station Feasibility Study

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #3 – Summary Recap

April 2025

MEETING DETAILS

MEETING DETAILS		Thursday, April 24, 2025 5:00PM – 6:30PM
Zoom Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 Presenters<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marie Lewis Adams, HDR• Joel Lessard-Clouston – HDR• David Sargent – Sargent Town Planning• David Bergman – Lisa Wise Consulting	
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 21 Total Participants<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 11 project team members○ 10 TAC members	
Technical Advisory Committee Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jonathan Gist - Anthony Vineyards• Dulce Lucero - City of Coachella Appointee• Pedro Rodriguez - Coachella Valley Housing Coalition• Chad Austin – Coachella Valley Water District• Randy Bowman – CVAG• Mark Lancaster – CVAG• Garrett Powell - Peter Rabbit Farms• John Powell Jr – Peter Rabbit Farms• Larry Salas – Riverside Unincorporated Appointee• Walter Watcher – Sunline Transit Agency	
Project Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anahi Fernandez - City of Coachella• Andrew Simmons - City of Coachella• Celina Jimenez - City of Coachella• Marie Lewis Adams – HDR• Joel Lessard-Clouston - HDR• David Sargent – Sargent Town Planning• Russ Cunningham – Sargent Town Planning• David Bergman – Lisa Wise Consulting• Jadon Gershon-Friedberg – Lisa Wise Consulting• Stevie Espinoza - Arellano Associates• Rachael Potts- Arellano Associates	

I. WELCOME & PRESENTATION

A. Welcome/Introductions

A technical advisory committee meeting was held on April 24, 2025, to engage Coachella Valley stakeholders and community leaders on the Coachella Rail Station Feasibility Study and Integrated Land Use and Transit Network Project. The meeting provided an opportunity to review public feedback from the second community meeting and review preliminary conceptual station designs. The meeting began with a welcome from Andrew Simmons, City of Coachella, thanking the attendees for their participation and asking everyone on the call to introduce themselves.

B. Presentation

Following the introduction, Marie Lewis Adams (HDR) opened the presentation by explaining the Coachella Station Feasibility Study's purpose and two-phase approach. Marie emphasized the role of the Technical Advisory Committee in shaping the study's direction and ensuring interagency coordination. Marie also highlighted past community engagement efforts, such as public workshops and surveys, which helped inform the site evaluation criteria. These criteria included land use compatibility, environmental constraints, accessibility, ridership potential, and alignment with local development goals.

Following the overview, Joel Lessard-Clouston from HDR provided a deeper technical analysis of the proposed site. He reviewed key engineering considerations such as space for bus loops, parking layouts, and pedestrian circulation. Joel also discussed necessary adjustments for each site, such as the possible addition of pedestrian bridges and modifications to existing rail alignments. Further input was provided by David Sargent from Sargent Town Planning, who addressed how each site aligned with goals for transit-oriented development, and David Bergman from Lisa Wise Consulting, who reviewed the economic feasibility of development scenarios.

II. Q & A DISCUSSION

The purpose of TAC #2 was to provide an update on the study's progress and gather input from the committee. Discussions focused on preliminary conceptual station designs. Below is a summary of key discussion points and feedback from TAC members.

Discussion Section 1: Study Purpose and Process Updates

1. **Q: Pedro S.G. Rodriguez:** Did you present to the City Council for their comments or review?

A: Marie Lewis Adams: Site 2—our recommended station location— was presented to the City Council on February 26. This is the same site we discussed with the TAC in January. There was general agreement on the location and productive discussion about the next steps, so we felt confident continuing along that path.

2. **Q: Larry Salas:** Where exactly is the proposed station site?

A: Marie Lewis Adams: When we began this process, we looked at three potential sites. One was farther north, near the Gateway Center and north of Avenue 50. Site 2 is in the Pueblo Viejo area, next to Coachella’s historic downtown. Site 3 was located south of Avenue 52. After public workshops and a comprehensive evaluation, Site 2 best aligned with our project goals and was selected as the preferred option.

3. Q: Larry Salas: Is Site 2 near the senior center, right?

A: Marie Lewis Adams: Yes, exactly. It’s just one block away from the senior center, which would make access especially convenient for seniors and nearby residents.

Discussion Section 2: TAC Role and Community Engagement

1. Q: Pedro S.G. Rodriguez: How many people participated in the last public engagement?

A: Marie Lewis Adams: We had both an in-person workshop and online surveys. At the March event, we received feedback from folks at the Coachella Branch Library and also connected with attendees at the Mariachi Festival. About 200 people provided input online in addition to those who attended in person, which gave us really good insight and will help us shape the station area concepts moving forward.

Discussion Section 2: Preliminary Station Layout

1. Q: Pedro S.G. Rodriguez: Is the Community Resilience Center already there, or is that something planned for the future?

A: Joel Lessard-Clouston: It’s planned for the future, but the site has already been selected. I believe it’s in the design phase. Andrew can probably confirm the timeline more precisely.

2. Q: Pedro S.G. Rodriguez: Will there be minimal pedestrian traffic in that area? Are you expecting a lot of people to come through? And how will they access the Community Resilience Center?

A: Andrew Simmons: The city has secured a grant for the Community Resilience Center, and we’re planning to release an RFP for a design-build in the coming months. Construction will move forward over the next couple of years. By the time the rail station is developed, the center should be fully operational. It will be accessed via Peter Rabbit Drive, which is just outside the bounds of the image shown today.

A: Joel Lessard-Clouston: The road on the opposite side of the tracks provides additional access. Yes, there will definitely be pedestrian traffic—especially since we’re partnering with a number of nonprofits that will be operating programs out of the center.

3. Q: Larry Salas: Will there be planned community development there? In terms of commercial, residential, access for traffic and people and so forth. Right now, it’s just basically bare land, isn’t it?

A: Andrew Simmons: No, there’s an existing building – the old hidden Harvest date packing house. It’s a 17,000-square-foot building, and we’re rehabilitating it. About half will become a Community Resilience Center, and the rest will be used for commercial space, classes, and venues. There’s going to

be a commercial kitchen for cooking classes, and we expect significant pedestrian and vehicle traffic there in the future. The design for the Community Resilience Center will continue over the next year and a half. It's already been brought to the City Council about five times and will come back multiple times through the design-bid process. The public-private partnership is pending, and we hope to open the facility within the next two years.

A: Marie Lewis Adams: We see the Community Resilience Center as a strength of this concept. It helps connect both sides of downtown and fits the overall design goals. One thing to point out is the station layout: the platforms are shown near 3rd or 4th Street—not further south at 6th or 7th—because there's an existing rail crossover to the south. We need to maintain some distance from that for proper rail alignment. That positioning also helps us better connect to the resilience center and still provide strong access to the development along 6th Street.

4. **Q: Pedro S.G. Rodriguez:** What's the purpose of that? The one platform closer to the Community Resilience Center.

A: Marie Lewis Adams: Yes, that center platform—positioned between the other two tracks—is there because Union Pacific owns this rail corridor, and it's primarily used for freight. When we propose building passenger stations along freight lines, Union Pacific typically requires a platform edge for all tracks. This ensures operational flexibility.

C: Walter Watcher: I'm Walter from Sunline. Yeah, that makes sense. I'm going to save the screen, and I'll talk to our Chief of Planning about it too. We can give you more detailed feedback. But I do agree—it's so close to our transit hub that it probably works well. That's probably sufficient from our perspective. So, we could come down 4th and make a left. Would there be any way to have that turnout closer to the intersection? That might help with circulation and routing flexibility.

C: Marie Lewis Adams: That's a good suggestion. We'll look into how close we can site the bus pullout to the intersection and see if we can make it work operationally.

C: Andrew Simmons: One of the reasons we placed it farther south was because the transit hub is on 4th Street. That allows buses to leave the train station, make a left onto 4th, and go straight to the transit hub. That seemed ideal for circulation. We intentionally placed it north of 6th Street so buses could also turn left at the 6th Street signalized intersection—this makes it easy to turn around. Plus, we're assuming the train station is 10 to 15 years away. By then, circulation patterns will likely evolve. Still, placing it between two signalized intersections—4th and 6th Streets—gives us flexibility for left-turn movements and improves routing overall.

5. **C: Pedro S.G. Rodriguez:** I like Concept 2. I'm not sure if you're expecting a recommendation from us.

C: Marie Lewis Adams: We can certainly take your input. At the moment, Concept 1 is our preferred layout. Concept 1 offers quicker access from the current downtown. People could walk directly to the platform, without crossing a bridge. With Concept 2, people from the Community Resilience Center would have direct access, which is great. But anyone coming from 6th Street, the buses, or the parking lot would have to cross the bridge to board. So, Concept 1 minimizes the number of people needing to use the bridge.

C: Larry Salas: Personally, I like Concept 2. Just for context, I'm a lifelong resident of Coachella.

C: Walter Watcher: Marie, I think I prefer Concept 1 after seeing it again.

C: Andrew Simmons: Just a few final thoughts on the concepts. Concept 1 adjusts the eastern track, which is beneficial because there aren't any businesses directly adjacent on that side. So, it has less impact on future development along Grapefruit. It also allows for a slightly larger station footprint, which could support a culturally relevant building design. Overall, like Marie said, the differences are small, and Union Pacific will ultimately decide which layout is feasible based on realignment and regulatory requirements. But from a planning standpoint, Concept 1 may provide better long-term opportunities for economic development.

6. **C: John Powell Jr.:** This is a good presentation. People are going to be excited about this, not just for the train, but for the ability to cross over the tracks. I mean, that's going to be used, you know. You're going to go to the train platforms, in order to get across. But I think what's going to be really important is the ability to cross over, it's going to probably be more useful to everybody.

C: David Sargent: I agree with you, John. The train's great but it's a question of which is the tail, and which is the dog. We think the downtown and what the property could become is really the dog, and we think the train is a really cool tail.

7. **Q: Pedro S.G. Rodriguez:** We built around 400 apartment units on Tyler St. Will they be able to walk just across the street and follow that red line on the map?

A: David Sargent: The next drawing you're going to see is going to have more streets than just the red line. Now, we're not claiming that we have figured out all the details 20 years from now. We'll show you illustrations at the next meeting of a network of streets similar what's in the downtown. So, the short answer to your question is, yes.

III. Closing

Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Marie Lewis Adams and Andrew Simmons thanked the TAC members for their time and contributions throughout the meeting. They confirmed that the project team would continue refining the station design concepts based on community feedback and technical analysis. They noted that the next steps include further refinement of the transit-oriented development vision and continued coordination with city staff and agency partners. Additionally, they mentioned that the next Technical Advisory Committee meeting would be held later in summer 2025 to review updated plans and gather more input. TAC members were encouraged to stay engaged, share any additional comments, and help promote future community engagement opportunities as the study advances.

Appendix A

[PowerPoint Presentation – April 28th, 2025](#)

[Screenshots](#)