



What is the CV Link?

The CV Link (formerly called “Parkway 1e11”) is a 52-mile multi-purpose trail along the Whitewater River from Palm Springs to Coachella. Utilizing existing portions of paved trail, the CV Link will interconnect the Coachella Valley cities and provide a continuous pathway for pedestrian, bicycle and low-speed electric vehicle modes of “clean and healthy” transportation. Future route segments include connections to Desert Hot Springs, Mecca, and the Salton Sea.

Won’t such a trail just get “washed out” anytime it rains?

No, the trail is built on top of the levee, not in the bottom of the wash. Trails like this have been built in many places along storm-water channels/rivers, such as the Santa Ana River.

Isn’t this just a luxury for the rich riding golf carts?

There is an identified community need across all social demographics for more transportation choices and recreational opportunities. The trail will be designed as a safe and comfortable route for bicycling, walking and jogging, with sufficient width and/or separation elements to also accommodate golf carts or low-speed neighborhood electric vehicles.

What is a NEV, or LSEV?

Low-Speed Electric Vehicles (LSEVs) are federally regulated to a maximum speed of 25 mph and include golf carts and Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs). NEVs are about the size of a golf cart and can carry 2, 4 or 6 people. NEVs are permitted to share a general traffic lane with cars on roads with posted speed limits up to and including 35 mph. Like golf carts, they are maneuverable, lightweight, and produce zero emissions.

How much will the CV Link cost to build?

The CV Link is a phased investment in our economic future. First phase estimates will be prepared once designs and alignments are refined. The actual cost will be determined when private contractors prepare bids to construct the project. Much of the cost is associated with under-crossings and bridges over roadways that will allow CV Link users to safely avoid busy streets. A comparison of estimated costs shows that while the CV Link could be about \$1.5 million per mile, the next interchange project on I-10 is estimated to cost \$55 to \$60 million; a 6-lane arterial roadway costs \$14 million per mile¹; and a freeway costs \$30 million per mile²!

¹ FDOT 2012 table of roadway centerline mile costs

² FHWA 1996 estimate for combined urban/rural freeway segment, in 2013 dollars



I understand that the project received air quality funds. Is the project an emission reduction project?

“Multi-modal” transportation trails like the CV Link are an eligible project for Sentinel air quality mitigation funds. The \$53 million fund, of which CVAG received \$17.4 million, was created through the approval process for a natural gas fired power plant located near Desert Hot Springs. Every project evaluated by the Air Quality Management District for funding demonstrated emission reductions and this project is no different, it was evaluated for its improvements to local air quality. Mobile sources like automobiles are the largest contributor to greenhouse gases in the Coachella Valley. The CV Link will provide non-polluting transportation options for many people, as well as reduce dust generated from the Whitewater River by paving levee tops and improving the slope protection.

I cannot imagine using this trail for my commute – it’s just too far!

While some commutes are indeed long, research shows that the average one-way trip length for all trip purposes is about 2 miles for motorists, 2.6 miles for bicycles and up to 5 miles for NEVs³. The CV Link will provide an option that encourages more people to walk, bike or use low-speed electric vehicles more often, not necessarily for every trip.

Are your usage estimates realistic, given the intense desert heat in summer? Isn’t it unsafe to encourage physical activity in summer heat?

The CV Link will feature closely spaced shade and windbreak structures as well as water fountains. From a transportation perspective, much of the commuting use will be in the relatively cooler morning hours, and the trip home can be done either at a more leisurely pace, at later hours, or using transit. The CV Link will provide another option for the many people who can be seen outdoors at 5pm in locations such as the Rancho Mirage Bump-n-Grind Trail.

Shouldn’t we be spending money in ways that improve the economy during these tough times?

Yes. Building roads, trails, and bridges not only creates construction jobs but leads to many other benefits⁴. For example:

- In the Outer Banks of North Carolina, a \$6 million investment in bike infrastructure is estimated to benefit that tourist region by about \$60 million annually!
- More than half of the visitors on the Greenbrier River Trail in West Virginia spend more than \$100 per visit and most come from out of state.
- Biking and hiking trails in Teton County, Wyoming are estimated to create an annual economic benefit of more than \$18 million.

³ http://www.scag.ca.gov/modeling/pdf/MVS03/MVS03_Chap05.pdf; 2009 National Household Travel Survey, Lincoln NEV Plan Review

⁴ <http://www.bikesbelong.org/resources/stats-and-research/statistics/economic-statistics/>



- Bicycling projects create an average of 11.4 jobs per million dollars spent, compared to just 7.8 jobs for road-only projects

An economic analysis of the CV Link project prepared by a renowned Inland Empire economist through the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership determined an estimated \$1.47 billion economic benefit through the year 2035. This includes \$152 million in reduced medical costs due to increased physical activity!

Are other areas considering bike and pedestrian trails as air quality projects?

Activists, community groups and private citizens throughout Southern California and the US are clamoring for more projects like the proposed CV Link BECAUSE of impacts on air quality, congestion and public health. In fact, the State's Attorney General recently joined a lawsuit against the San Diego Association of Governments because, in large part, as Attorney General Kamala Harris bluntly claimed, "SANDAG can't meet Greenhouse Gas goals set by state law by building highways now and other transportation options later." She also noted the low amount of funding going towards walking and bicycling in the plan.

How quickly can the trail system be built?

Sections of this regional trail system are already in place. In Rancho Mirage, Cathedral City, Palm Springs and Palm Desert, small sections of the trail exist and are being used. Most of these sections will need to be widened and improved, but this can be accomplished relatively quickly, in the next few years. Other sections will require working with the Coachella Valley Water District on easements and other detailed engineering and analysis. Some segments will take up to a decade to plan, design and construct.

Aren't there golf courses in part of the Whitewater River? Will the trail go through the golf courses?

There are a number of golf courses in the river bed. The trail already exists along Mesquite Country Club and Tahquitz Creek Golf Course in Palm Springs, and Morningside Country Club in Rancho Mirage. In other private golf courses, it is likely that the trail would be routed around the country clubs on city streets or through an access controlled channel that does not interfere with the fairways. Detailed engineering and environmental analysis and public outreach and involvement will help determine actual routes.

Isn't mixing Neighborhood Electric Vehicles, bikes and pedestrians a recipe for conflict and accidents?

There is always the risk of accidents on bike paths, roads and even trails. The CV Link proposes to have a separate path for pedestrians and that bikes and LSEVs would share a paved path. The intent is to actually reduce accidents involving bikes and pedestrians on busy streets like Highway 111, Ramon Road and Fred Waring Drive by giving families, seniors, tourists, and others a safe route away from fast, heavy automobile traffic.



Who supports the project and why?

Dozens of organizations, individuals and agencies have indicated their support for the project. The organizations represent business and real estate groups, the tourist industry, regional governments, environmental groups, hospitals and public health care organizations and others. The breadth of support reflects the project's potential public health, recreation, economic development, congestion relief and air quality benefits. These supporting organizations recognize that much engineering, environmental and public involvement work still needs to take place

Who will operate and maintain the CV Link? And pay to do so!

Fortunately, this is public infrastructure, not building a hospital, recreation center or creating a new program which requires expensive staffing and large government budgets. Still, pavement management (repair and replacement) will be necessary as will some stewardship of the trail (e.g. ensuring that motorcycles aren't zipping up and down the trail). Stewardship of the trail will largely come from how much the trail is utilized. A popular trail with many feet and "eyes" is a safe trail and one that is largely managed by the users. Adopt-A-Trail programs can help with basic cleanup. Pavement maintenance systems would have to be implemented and such a plan will be developed during the planning and environmental compliance phase over the next two years. Maintaining the CV Link in A++ condition will be essential to encouraging use. Existing short urban trails in the Coachella Valley, such as the Bear Creek Trail in La Quinta, have modest maintenance costs.

What if someone has an emergency on the trail? How will people feel safe using it?

The entire trail will be accessible to emergency services, and evenly spaced distance markers will help users advise their location. Part of the project is to develop a security and enforcement plan agreed to by city police departments. Trail rangers could be another response option. Cameras and adequate lighting will be considered to help address personal security concerns, but the key will be having a well-designed and maintained trail that attracts many users and hence discourages anti-social behavior.