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Scott,

Thank you for your continued support of CV Link. You recently asked about a claim that is circulating that the costs of CV Link have doubled because low-speed electric vehicles (LSEVs) were added to CV Link. This is not the case. Only 3.8% of all the capital costs can be attributed to this component of CV Link, and further details are included in this letter.

The paved part of CV Link is 14 feet wide, just 2 feet wider than the long planned and partially implemented bike trail in the same location. As you can already see on our cities' sidewalks and bike lanes, accommodating golf carts on existing facilities does not require much more change than signing and striping. The project's most expensive line items are actually for grade separations at roadways, such as bridges and undercrossings. This is a safety measure that is absolutely worth investing in, and will ensure that people on CV Link won't need to constantly stop at crosswalks to cross busy streets where drivers are often distracted and driving at high speeds.

### The Whitewater River bike trail

A bike trail down the Whitewater River was preliminarily engineered in the December 10, 2009 Whitewater River, All American Canal and Dillon Road Regional Trails Corridor Study, which was prepared for the Desert Recreation District and Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District by The Dangermond Group. Note that CVAG nor the cities had any direct role in preparing or approving the report. The Dangermond concept was a 12 foot wide bike trail and a 12 foot wide riding trail that stretched 35 miles. (See Figure 1)

A similar cross section was prepared as part of the June 2014 CV Link Master Plan. (See Figure 2)

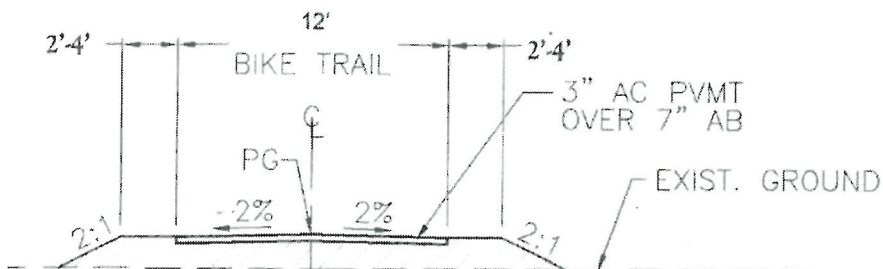


Figure 1 – 12' wide path in 2009 plan

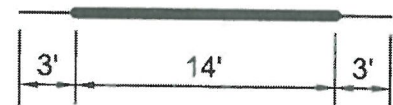


Figure 2 – 14' wide path in 2014 plan

Low-speed electric vehicles became part of the plan when CVAG took a look at it in 2011.

In order to increase the safety of users along CV Link, to accommodate higher traffic seasons, and to allow a mix of bikes and golf carts/low speed electric vehicles, the paved portion of the trail was slightly widened by 2 feet, to 14 feet. CV Link does not include the 12 foot wide unpaved riding trail, but does include an unpaved pedestrian path that will be between 4 and 6 feet. An equestrian trail may be constructed or extended on the other “side” or levee along portions of the Whitewater River in the future.

Both the 2009 and 2014 reports readily acknowledge that the standard cross sections will change to account for local conditions (e.g. sometimes the pedestrian path will be a couple of feet away from the paved path and other times it will be much further away).

### Actual Conditions on the Existing Trail

Parts of the Whitewater River trail/ CV Link path exist today in Palm Springs, Cathedral City and Rancho Mirage. The path in Rancho Mirage actually is a multi-use path nearly identical to what is planned for CV Link, with a paved path for bikers and golf carts and a soft path for equestrians or joggers.

Figure 3 depicts a typical section of the Butler- Abrams Trail in Rancho Mirage. This trail already allows for golf carts. The paved portion of the path is 10 feet wide and the “right of way” for the entire trail is about 30’ wide.



Figure 3 – Butler-Abrams Trail, measured 120 feet from trailhead off of County Club where average width is 33’ 4”

This is a number that has been repeated and taken out of context with respect to CV Link many times, with some saying CV Link is a 30’ wide roadway. Much like the existing trail in Rancho Mirage, there will not be 30’ of pavement but rather there may be about 30 feet of right of way or distance between property lines.



**So, how is a trail that accommodates only bikes different than one that accommodates golf carts AND bikes?**

There isn't much of a difference. As in Rancho Mirage, there is some additional signing. (See Figure 4)

In the case of CV Link, the paved trail is slightly wider than a standard bike trail. There are also some minor design features that are added, but wheeled vehicles like bikes and golf carts and low speed electric vehicles have many of the same turning requirements, grade/slope requirements and safety considerations.



Figure 4 – Butler-Abrams Trail in Rancho Mirage

**So, even if the trail isn't much different, why include these low-speed electric vehicles?**



1. Because our community includes people who may be disabled, too frail, or too sick to walk, run or bike. That is one reason that groups such as Incight support the project. Mobility should be open to as many people as possible.

2. Because our community includes people that cannot afford an automobile. Owning an automobile is expensive, and groups like the Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability have pointed out that "CV Link, along Highway 111, could provide easy, accessible and safe pedestrian access to employment opportunities for low-wage workers." A low-speed electric vehicle or a used golf cart might provide mobility

to households who cannot, or don't need to, own an automobile.

3. Because it is likely we already have some of the highest numbers and densities of golf carts in nation thanks to our 100-plus golf courses.
4. Because we already mix these uses and it seems to work in places like La Quinta, Palm Desert and Rancho Mirage.
5. Because the world is changing, and if we aren't prepared for that change, we may be left in the dust. The governor just signed legislation that legalizes electric-assist bikes for bike path use, and small electric vehicles are increasingly popular. They will be in our community. Do we want them on Highway 111 and other major streets, or do we want them with other smaller-scale vehicles like bikes and golf carts?





6. Because [hotels like the Renaissance Indian Wells Resort and the Hyatt](#) have indicated that CV Link is “an amenity we could market to our guests, as we suspect many of them are always looking for new ways to stay active and enjoy the Valley’s unique outdoor environment.”
7. Because it can help us stimulate new forms of travel and economic opportunity. Bike sharing. Electric bike sharing. Testing new solar and electric vehicles. The possibilities are endless, and the Coachella Valley and CV Link could be a real world test track for such technologies.



**But, Back to the Original Question: Can’t we reduce the Project Cost by Eliminating Golf Carts/LSEVs?**

Yes... a little. If we go back to the original idea of just a bike lane – which, by state law now must include electric bikes – we shave off 2’ of the 14’ wide path. We also eliminate a few signs. Only 3.8% of all the capital costs can be attributed to the NEV component of CV Link, and removing them would have a similarly negligible impact on future operations and maintenance. Creating a pedestrian path is actually a greater cost to the construction than NEVs, or about 8 percent of the construction costs.

**What if we still eliminated golf carts and LSEVs in order to save a few million dollars?**

The idea of a bike trail down the Whitewater River had been on the books and in the public’s eye for decades. Cathedral City was successful in securing \$800,000 in grants for a small section of the bike trail, virtually no other money had been secured in decades.



That changed with CV Link and its broader vision that focuses on providing public health, air quality, mobility and economic benefits. In the last three years, more than \$75 million has been secured for the project. The latest award was \$10.9M in 2014 from the State of California, and what has been the largest award of a project of its kind in the state’s history. Much of the funding is tied to the vision of CV Link including multiple forms of transportation, both for the active who can jog and walk and those who cannot and need electric vehicle support for physical or even economic reasons. Eliminating one of the objectives of CV Link could jeopardize some of this funding.

