



City Council Lends Support to a Maglev Stop in Santa Clarita

By Christi Anne Corpus
Signal Staff Writer

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Santa Clarita City Council members on Tuesday approved a formal resolution supporting the development of the Orangeline Maglev station in Santa Clarita.

The proposed Orangeline Maglev System is a privately funded, high-speed magnetic levitation train system that will serve the densely populated transit corridor through the Los Angeles and Orange counties.

The first phase of development of the system would include the construction of a 33-mile route stretching from the city of Palmdale to Orange County, with one proposed stop in Santa Clarita.

The Santa Clarita Orangeline Maglev Station would be located between Highway 14 and Sierra Highway, between Placerita Canyon, the future Santa Clarita Parkway and Golden Valley Road. This site is undergoing investigation as part of the Orangeline feasibility study by the authority's consultant, ARCADIS.

The report, supported by the City Council, discusses the definition of transit-oriented development and compares the concept with things already in existence, said Debbie Helbig, project development coordinator for the city.

It also describes characteristics of a quarter-mile walkable zone with transit, commercial and open space areas in a half-mile radius around the station.

"The report gives design concepts and suggestions not just for the station itself, but for potential development in the immediate area," she said.

As part of the resolution, the council also agreed to consider recommendations made by the authority in its Maglev Station Area Development Policy Report, titled Milestone 7.

Through Milestone 7, the Orangeline Development Authority recommends that member cities amend general plans and land use regulations, and take advantage of state funding programs that give priority to state investment in transportation projects that link transportation to transit-oriented land development.

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"I think because we are still in feasibility study phase, we are still learning all the components that go into building a transportation system like this," Helbig said. "We will have a better idea of what to expect after the feasibility study is finished."

City staff members expect to provide the City Council with results from the study after its anticipated completion in late 2006 or early 2007.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation in August to support the decisions of California cities to fund the Orangeline Development Project. Assembly Bill 2882 would allow member cities of the project that establish an infrastructure financing district to fund public transit facilities to provide some or all of that funding to the Orangeline Development Authority.

Traffic engineers in Munich, Germany are also developing a maglev system, despite a recent crash that occurred at the Transrapid Maglev Test Facility in Emsland, a town near Germany's Dutch border.

On Sept. 22 the high-speed maglev train traveling at 105 mph crashed into a maintenance vehicle parked on the test track and ripped open the top section of the vehicle, leaving 23 people dead and 10 injured.

Initial reports from Transrapid International maintained that the crash was the result of human error.

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