

The Valley's New "CV Link" Golf Cart Highway

Summary:

A new 52 mile Golf Cart Highway is in the planning stages that will link all desert cities. The Coachella Valley Association of Governments has changed the focus of their proposed Whitewater River trail from a walking-running-bicycling path to one designed for motorized electric vehicles. Their new plan, essentially a Golf Cart Highway, includes a wide roadbed for electric powered vehicles together with an adjacent smaller path for individual use.

The Valley's New "CV Link" Golf Cart Highway

Palm Springs, California. Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) officials have a new name for their proposed 52 mile trail adjacent to the Whitewater River wash. The previous "Parkway 1e11" name has been replaced by "CV Link". The change was revealed during a public "dog and pony show" type presentation by trail planners in Palm Springs on Tuesday evening, June 4th.

The purpose of the public presentation was to publicize decisions made by CVAG officials. Their process appears rather autocratic and the meeting made clear past and future trail planning decisions would be made by hired outside consultants, a contracted public relations firm and CVAG staff members. Although public comment and other input will be accepted the views of the community may not greatly impact the process. Certainly the rather secretive method that resulted in the name change is indicative of the autocratic process.

There is a new aspect to the trail that had not previously been made known. CVAG staff appears to have abandoned the non-motorized trail concept and now propose to include electric motor vehicles. The change will be result in a 52 mile Golf Cart Highway along the river bed embankment. The latest design shows a 30 foot-wide swath of road bed will be required for the two-lane Golf Cart Highway along with an adjacent smaller path for runners, walkers and other non-motorized users. CVAG planners labeled the shared use concept as "multi-modal". It's claimed the trail will be of national significance, presumably because no other public trail combines a Golf Cart Highway with a promenade designed for individual movement activities.

The original cost of the trail was estimated to be \$80 million and \$47 million in funding has since been obtained. What is not known is how much the addition of a double-wide trail to accommodate a Golf Cart Highway will require in additional funding costs. Another aspect yet to be documented is whether all segments of the 52 mile route will accommodate a 30 foot wide right-of-way. None of these and similar hard questions were answered during the public presentation. What is known is that the planning phase is expected to continue, at substantial cost, for several years and actual construction will not occur before the year 2016. CVAG's Trail planning has clearly embarked on a different course than that originally envisioned and it may yet evolve beyond the Golf Cart Highway into something even more grandiose.

Is funding a 52 mile Golf Cart Highway an appropriate use for trail funds? Is there sufficient funding available to guarantee its completion? Will it be possible to secure the rights to build a 30 foot wide highway and trail along the Whitewater River wash route? Answers are needed for these and other questions.

"CV Link" is a rather poor, unimaginative choice of names. Perhaps planners should consider substituting the descriptive "CV Golf Cart Highway" as the one more appropriate.

Bond Shands

Desert Political Opinion at www.DesertObserver.com

June 5, 2013

www.DesertObserver.com

A Palm Springs and Coachella Valley Community Politics Blog

Copyright © Bond Shands - P.O. Box 4826, Palm Springs, CA 92263 - Reproduction with attribution permitted.