

COMPARING METROLINK STATION CHOICE

The Riverside County Transportation Commission owns two pieces of vacant land only one mile apart. Both locations are next to railroad tracks. One location has Metrolink train service and the other does not.

The Riverside County Transportation Commission spent \$16,771,000.00 for 2 pieces of vacant land only one mile apart:

\$8,625,000.00 for 17.22 acres at Highgrove

\$8,146,000.00 for 9.35 acres at Marlborough Ave.

\$16,771,000.00

- RCTC's 17.22 acre property at Highgrove has three railroad tracks on the west side and one railroad track on the east side. RCTC's 9.35 acre property at Marlborough Ave. has only one railroad track on the east side.
- Metrolink's Inland Empire-Orange County Line was opened in October of 1995 and Highgrove is located on the Inland Empire-Orange County Line where there are existing Metrolink trains. The Perris Valley Line track between Highgrove and Perris is not on the Inland Empire-Orange County Line and has no Metrolink train service at all.
- On July 15, 2006 the five day per week Metrolink trains going through Highgrove was increased to seven days a week. There is no Metrolink service on the entire 38 mile Perris Valley Line track between Highgrove and where it dead ends at San Jacinto.
- RCTC's Highgrove property currently has Metrolink trains that pass by the west side of their property seven days a week. RCTC's Marlborough Ave. property currently does not have any Metrolink trains because the poor track condition only qualifies for freight train service.
- Thousands of commuter trains have passed right through Highgrove next to property now owned by RCTC but RCTC refuses to build a parking lot and stop any of the existing Metrolink trains. The Marlborough Ave. property will not have any future Metrolink service between Highgrove and Perris until the track is replaced, sidings are added, and CTC is installed. CTC is a signal system for train movements that is controlled by a train dispatcher.
- The Highgrove property has 1.75 acres of room for expansion in addition to the 17.22 acres RCTC already owns, which would be approximately 19 acres. The corner property at Marlborough Ave. is approximately half of the size of the Highgrove property and the other 3 corners at Marlborough Ave. are unusable.
- The Highgrove property was purchased by RCTC for \$8,625,000.00 to enable building a curved track to connect the BNSF railroad to the Perris Valley Line track. After the Highgrove property was purchased RCTC purchased the Marlborough Ave. property for an additional amount of \$8,146,000.00 instead of considering a compromise to cancel the Marlborough Ave. station because it is not needed.
- On Feb. 7, 2011 a compromise was offered to Ann Mayer, Executive Director of RCTC for future Metrolink trains using the Perris Valley Line to not stop at Highgrove at all, in exchange for building a station at Highgrove. Canceling

the Marlborough Ave. station would have saved \$8,146,000.00 and reduced the travel time between Riverside and Moreno Valley.

The compromise was rejected.

- Instead of a station at Marlborough Ave., another platform could be built on the east side of RCTC's Highgrove property to allow future Metrolink train service between Perris and San Bernardino. The Marlborough Ave. station will not have any Metrolink service to San Bernardino. It will only operate between Riverside and Perris.

RCTC needs to reduce the Perris Valley Line costs to qualify for Federal "Small Starts" funding and cost estimates of Perris Valley Line limit of \$250,000,000.00 may have already been exceeded.

Even though RCTC has already spent \$16,771,000.00 for the two pieces of vacant land, both properties still need improvements such as grading, station construction, etc.

So in order to qualify for federal funding under the federal "small starts program", here is what is being done to try and stay under the \$250,000,000.00 limit: RCTC sent a letter to the Federal Transit Administration dated Aug. 24, 2009. RCTC requested and received permission from the FTA to only charge 38% of the \$8,625,000.00 they paid for the Highgrove property because RCTC said they only need the width of the track for the curve. RCTC was required to buy the entire 17.22 acres but instead of charging \$8,625,000.00 to the Perris Valley Line they are only charging \$3,277,500.00 to the Perris Valley Line project. RCTC claims the remaining 62% or \$5,347,500.00 is an "uneconomic remnant" and that amount of the purchase price will be taken out of "Measure A" Transportation funds which are funds that taxpayers authorized a few years ago for local projects.

The remaining 62% of this property that they call an "uneconomic remnant" is the same property where the public has been trying to get a Metrolink stop for 11 years! (Highgrove CSA-126 Nov. 27, 2001)

RCTC is admitting that they paid \$5,347,500.00 for property they do not need for the Perris Valley Line. The \$5,347,000.00 plus the money from the sale of the Marlborough Ave. property could be used to build a parking lot and platform on their Highgrove property that would benefit the entire region.

SOLUTION: RCTC should sell the Marlborough Ave. property, which would reduce the total cost of the Perris Valley Line by \$8,146,000.00 and use that money, plus the \$5,347,500.00 that RCTC diverted from the Perris Valley Line funds to the Measure "A" funds. These two funding sources would be sufficient to build a parking lot and improvements at Highgrove where there are existing Metrolink trains seven days a week!

Marlborough Ave. is the wrong location because it is one mile from the existing Metrolink trains at Highgrove and the other 3 corners are unusable!

These photos show the 4 corners at Marlborough Avenue.

**Site of RCTC's Metrolink station
on N/W corner of Marlborough
Ave. & Perris Valley Line track.**

Cost:

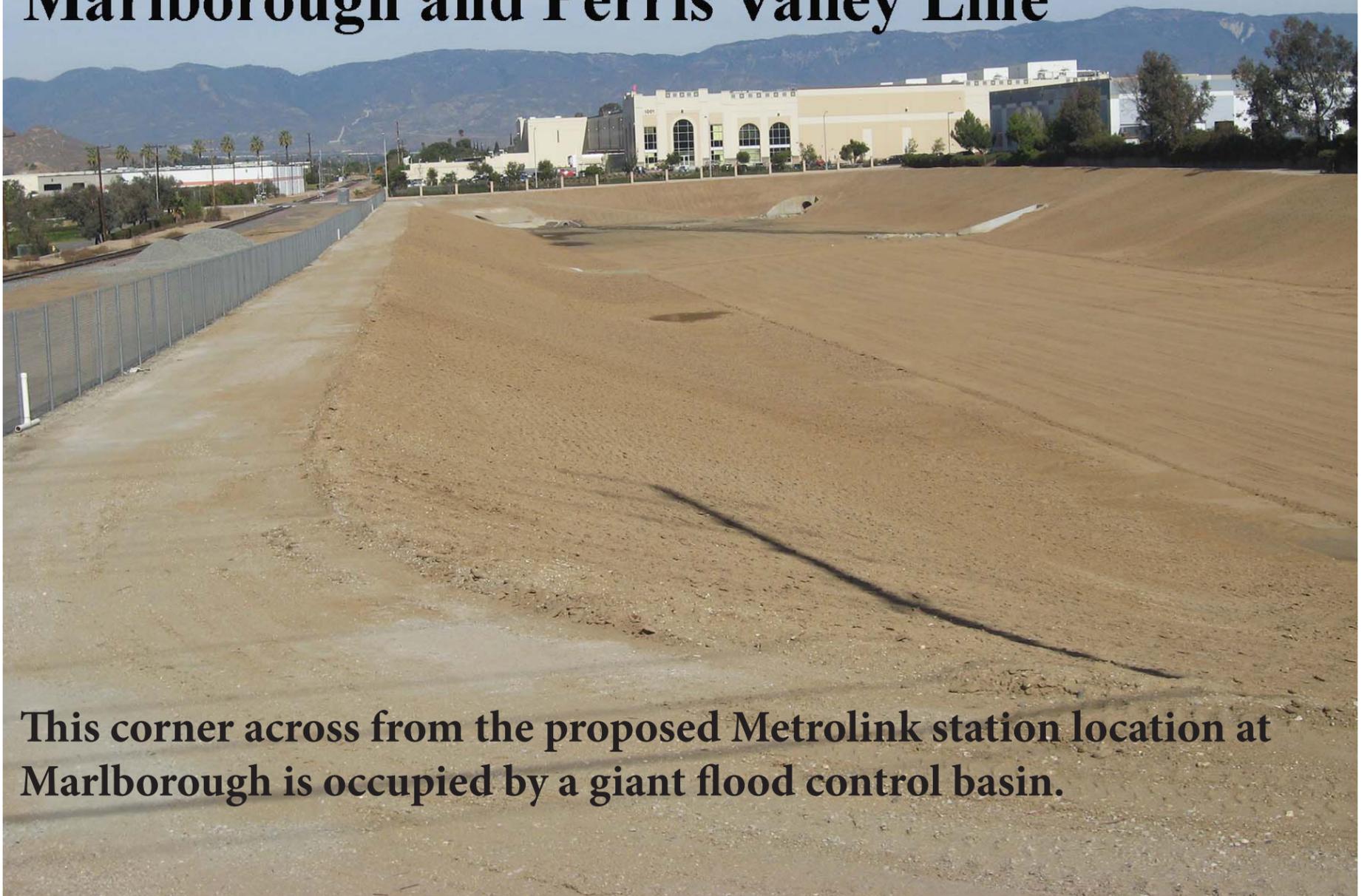
\$8,146,000.00

One Mile from here to Highgrove

**Sugarloaf Mountain:
S/E corner Marlborough Ave. and
Perris Valley Line**

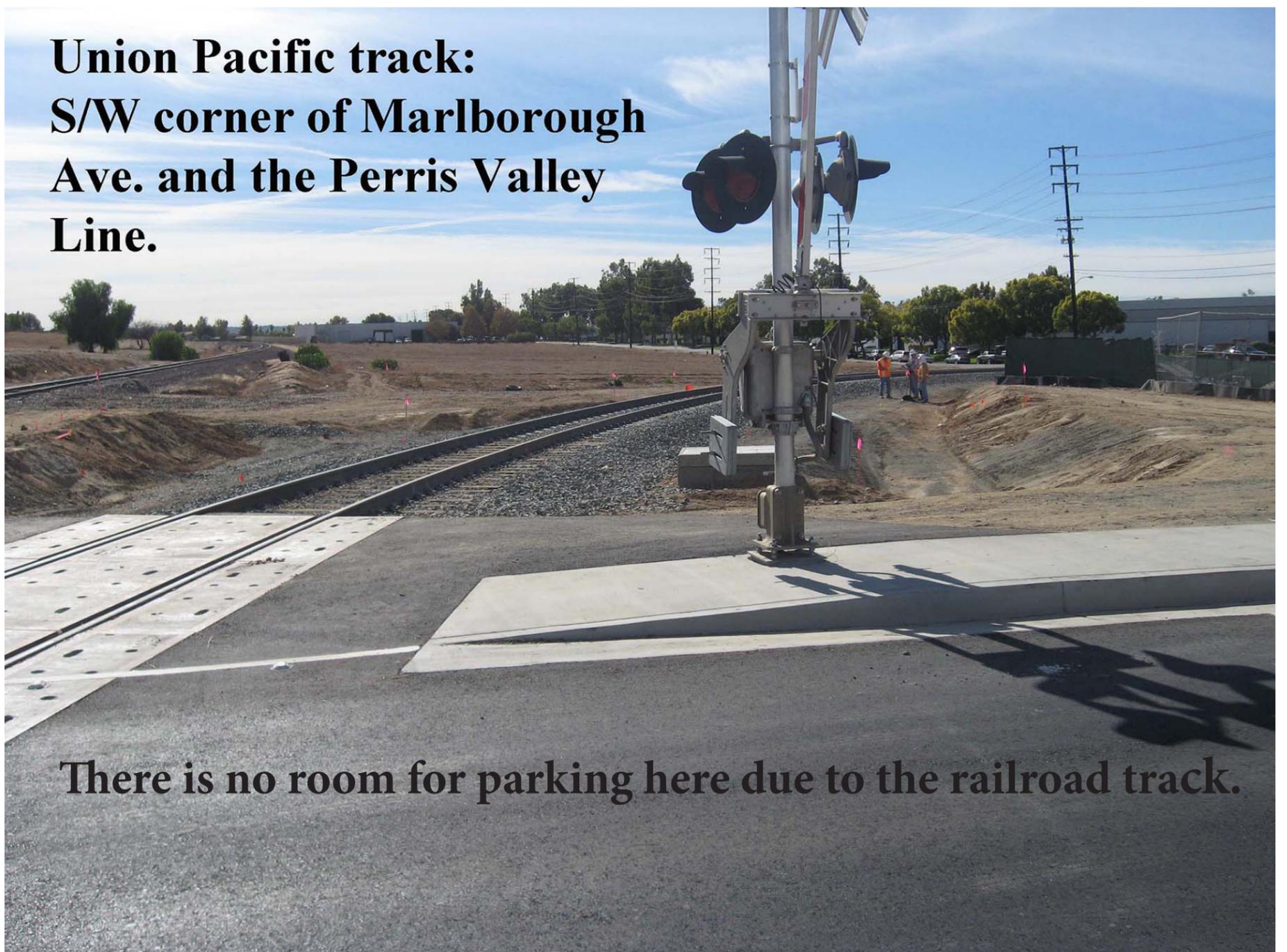
This corner has no room for parking due to the mountain.

Flood Control Basin: N/E corner of Marlborough and Perris Valley Line



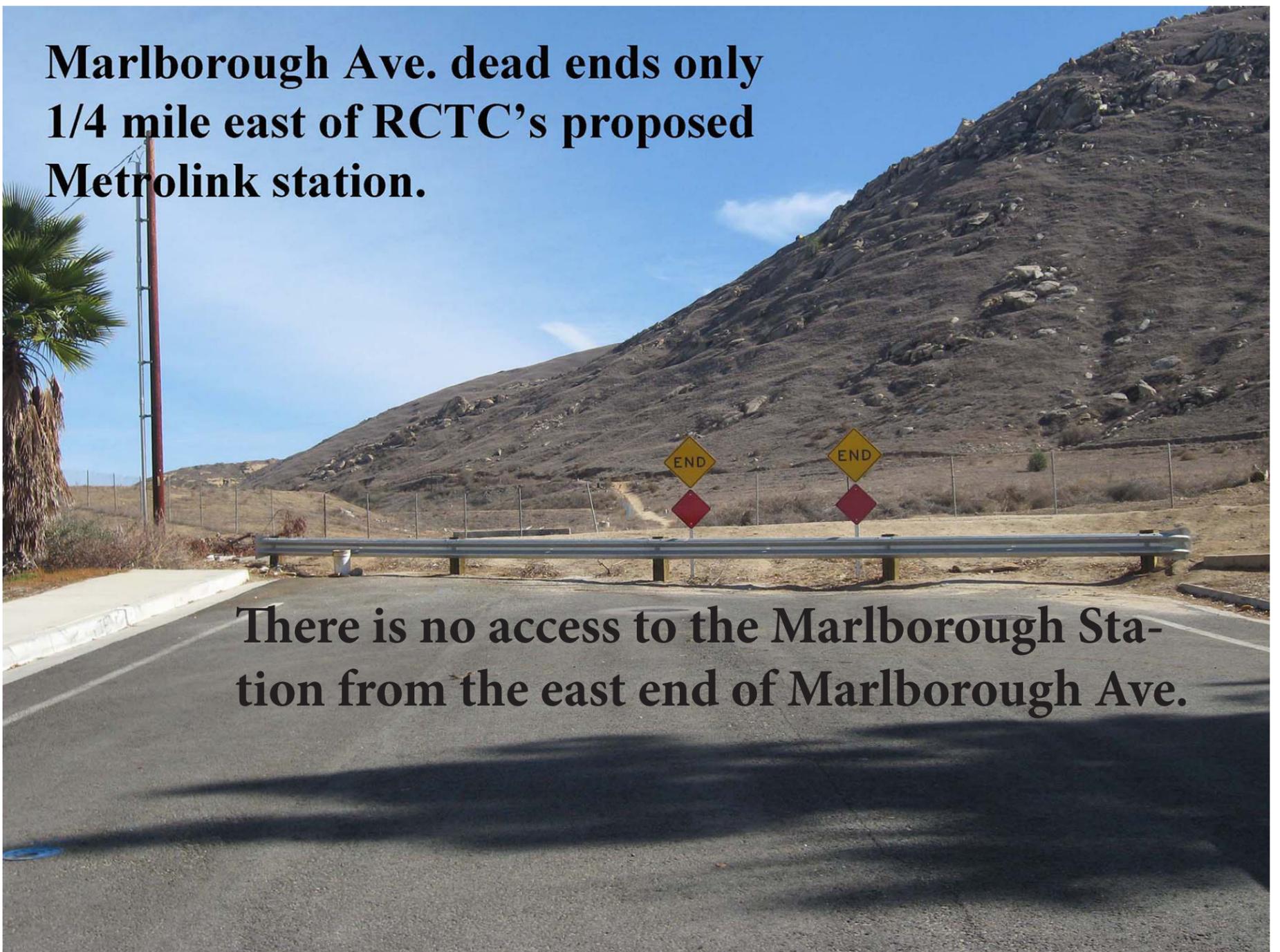
This corner across from the proposed Metrolink station location at Marlborough is occupied by a giant flood control basin.

Union Pacific track: S/W corner of Marlborough Ave. and the Perris Valley Line.



There is no room for parking here due to the railroad track.

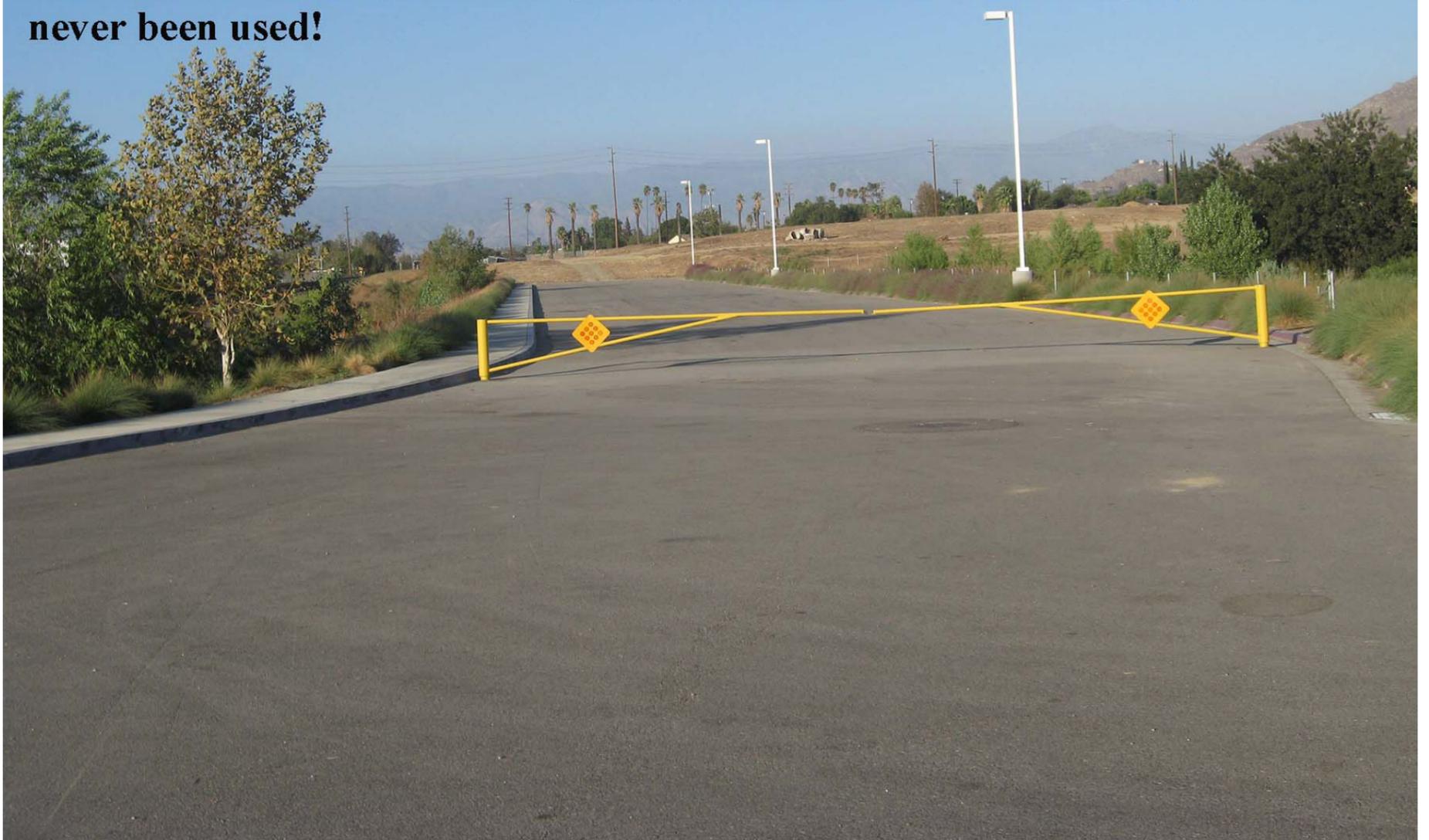
**Marlborough Ave. dead ends only
1/4 mile east of RCTC's proposed
Metrolink station.**



**There is no access to the Marlborough Sta-
tion from the east end of Marlborough Ave.**

This road was built in July of 2008 and has never been used!

This “new” road over the arroyo is the entrance to the 17.22 acre Highgrove Metrolink site owned by RCTC but has been blocked off for over 4 years preventing access from Citrus St. near the Iowa Ave overpass. This paved road has a sidewalk, curb and gutter, street lights and landscaping but has never been used!



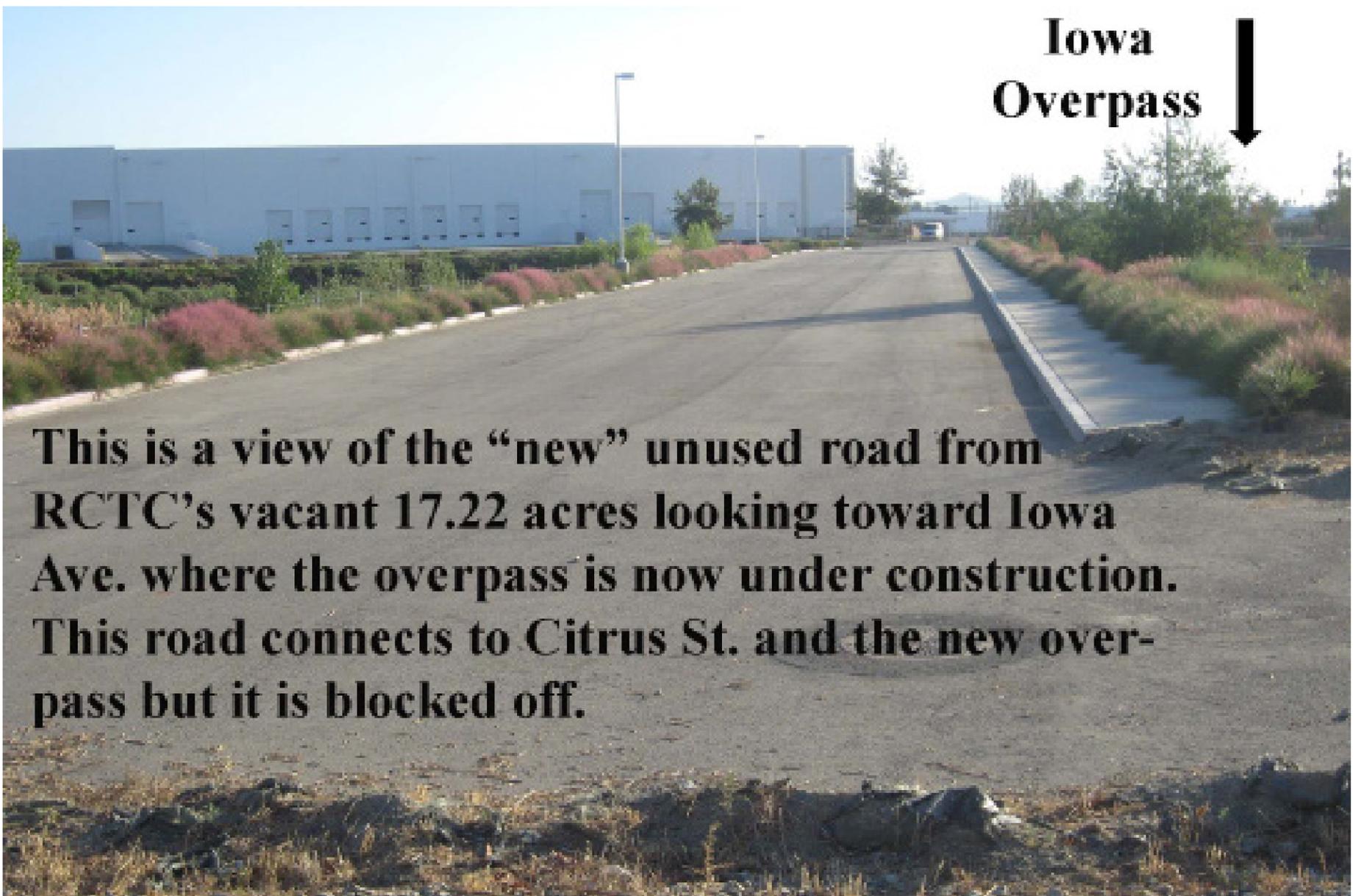
Metrolink trains have passed by this Highgrove location for 11 years without stopping, but these barriers prevent access to RCTC's property where a Highgrove Metrolink station could be located.



A 1/2 mile extension of this road could connect to Spring Street

By extending this street 1/2 mile through RCTC's 17.22 acre property between Citrus St. and Spring St., Highgrove and Grand Terrace residents and future residents in the Spring Mountain Ranch Project could go straight into the Highgrove Metrolink location via Spring Street. The Spring Mountain Ranch Project already has \$250,000,000.00 invested in infrastructure only 1 mile east of the Highgrove Metrolink location. The existing grade crossing at Villa St. could be closed because it will not be needed, but it could be used for emergencies.

The extension of Spring St. could go over or under the track for parking access to both sides of the curved track, and the grading for the curved track and the Highgrove parking lot could all be done at the same time. This short road could be used by any vehicles including emergency vehicles that could be blocked by train derailments like the ones on May 16, 2006, when Center St. was blocked for 4 hours, and on Aug. 26, 2006, three months later, when both Center St. and Main St. were blocked for 18 hours due to another derailment. The new 1/2 mile extension of Spring St. through RCTC's property would provide access to both sides of the BNSF tracks via the new Iowa Ave. overpass when freight trains block Main St. or Center Street.



This is a view of the “new” unused road from RCTC’s vacant 17.22 acres looking toward Iowa Ave. where the overpass is now under construction. This road connects to Citrus St. and the new overpass but it is blocked off.

Efficiency and common sense:

Highgrove is in Riverside County and RCTC has jurisdiction over transportation funds in Riverside County. The Highgrove station would be located only 1/2 mile south of the county line but RCTC continues to oppose using the existing commuter trains between the two counties that would benefit the entire region. Resident from both sides of the county line want our tax money to be used to build a station at Highgrove next to the vacant land that is already owned by the Riverside County Transportation Commission where there are established commuter trains. The Highgrove location is the most efficient use of the land and makes the most sense.

RCTC’s only goal has been to establish future commuter rail service between Riverside and Perris. But for the last 11 years, RCTC has turned a blind eye to the obvious benefits the Highgrove station would provide to commuters on both sides of the county line. There is no valid reason why RCTC should continue to oppose the Highgrove location or why additional public tax money should be spent to improve Marlborough Avenue.

Please return to the home page. By clicking on each item of **“Supporting Docs”** you can view the original letters or city resolutions of support. Also please click on. **“8 years of comments”** and watch the short video.

Your input and comments will be appreciated.

Thank you,

R. A. “Barney” Barnett (951) 683 4994 highgrovenews@roadrunner.com