



Pedestrians to get new crossing at rail station

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Camarillo will have a new pedestrian crossing at the city's Metrolink Station by the end of the year, officials say.

That means pedestrians will be able to cross the tracks from one platform to the other without having to use the nearly quarter-mile long overhead walkway.

The Ventura County Transportation Commission and Union Pacific have worked out the details and commission Executive Director Ginger Gherardi expects a formal agreement within the month.

"It will be a signalized pedestrian crossing," she said. "There will either be gates or arms and lights."

Once the formal agreement is approved, the next step will be for the commission to go to the state Public Utilities Commission for final approval. "Then the crosswalk can be designed," Gherardi said.

The decision is welcome news for commuters who regularly use the Camarillo Metrolink station.

Camarillo resident Bill Wolfe, 57, catches the bus every day at the station, which sits between Dawson Drive and Lewis Road next to Highway 101.

"I think the crossing's needed," Wolfe said. "The overpass takes 15 full minutes to cross over so if the train ends up on the other side, I've seen people racing for that. And it will help me with my bicycle to have a pedestrian crossing."

Dick Duran, 70, uses the Metrolink system to travel between his home in Simi Valley, and Moorpark and Camarillo.

"It's fantastic news," Duran said. "It's badly needed here. The other stations I have used all have them, and I couldn't quite understand why they didn't have one here. You have a parking lot that doesn't get used that often because people can't get to it. You don't want to go over the bridge and down and around, especially if you're older."

The commission has wanted a crossing since the station was built three years ago, but Union Pacific blocked the move, citing safety concerns. However, the crossing will now be built at a point the commission identified as a safe area.

The City Council has followed the issue closely, and Mayor Jan McDonald praised the way the commission and Union Pacific worked together to reach a solution.

"Now we know it can be done safely, we're happy and we're looking forward to it," she said.

The second platform reached by the crosswalk has been temporarily closed by the railroad. Tom Fox, the city's director of Public Works, said many residents had concerns about being on the wrong side of the tracks from the train, but once built, the new crossing will make it accessible again.

"It will also allow more trains to stop at Camarillo during the daytime," Fox said.

The crossing is estimated to cost \$200,000, and the money is already in place to fund it.

"It will be paid for out of our share of the transit bond money allocated to the county," Gherardi said.



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