



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 17.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JANUARY 20, 2016**

SUBJECT: REGIONAL RAIL UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the **Regional Rail Update through December 2015.**

ISSUE

The Regional Rail unit of the Program Management Department is responsible for providing overall coordination, management, and the programming of funds for LACMTA’s commitment to the commuter, intercity, and high speed rail networks serving Los Angeles County. This unit also manages and coordinates capital improvement projects along the LACMTA owned railroad right-of-way.

DISCUSSION

LACMTA is the largest member agency for the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), the operator of the Metrolink commuter rail network. Metrolink carries approximately 42,000 riders per day throughout the southern California Region.

LACMTA is a member of the Los Angeles - San Diego - San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency. This Joint Powers Authority (JPA) coordinates the passenger rail services of the three carriers (Amtrak, Metrolink, and COASTER) within this intercity rail corridor. In July, day-to-day management of the Pacific Surfliner intercity rail service was transferred from the State to local control.

LACMTA is instrumental in the planning and coordination efforts within the County of Los Angeles for the future high speed rail alignment connecting northern California to southern California. Staff is involved with regional and statewide groups working to develop integrated passenger rail service in the state.

The Regional Rail team coordinates and leads capital improvement projects for the Metro owned and Metrolink operated right-of-way.

Capital Projects

The Regional Rail unit has 10 capital improvement projects that it is actively managing.

- Bob Hope Airport/Hollywood Way Station, Antelope Valley Line

This project will add a new Metrolink station on the Antelope Valley Line, to provide better access to the Bob Hope Airport. Procurement for the construction of the Project is underway. The design is complete and staff is working through the final issues related to procurement and the associated grant. The major issue is the obligation of FHWA funds for construction of the project. Staff is working with Caltrans to resolve this issue. This is scheduled to be out to bid for construction in early 2016.

- Bob Hope Airport Pedestrian Grade Separation, Ventura Line

This project will construct an elevated walkway to enhance safety and directly link the current station to the airport. In March 2015 the Metro Board awarded the design contract. Notice to Proceed was issued in April 2015. Staff is working closely with Burbank/Bob Hope Airport staff in the development of the project. The alternative analysis is completed. 30% submittal has been reviewed and comments are being addressed. The 65% design documents are currently being developed. Staff is coordinating with Burbank/Bob Hope Airport, Amtrak, Caltrans, LOSSAN, City of Burbank, Metrolink, Union Pacific, and utility owners to identify potential issues early on in the project.

- Brighton to Roxford Double Track

This project will double track 10.95 miles of the Antelope Valley Line between Burbank and Sylmar. Once completed, Metrolink will be able to significantly improve on time performance and operation reliability on the Antelope Valley Line. This project includes construction of three new railroad bridges, modification of 15 at-grade crossings, and modifications to two stations. The project will be designed to be compatible with the future high speed rail alignment. Once completed, there will be continuous double track between Los Angeles Union Station and CP Balboa in the Sylmar area. The Metro Board awarded the contract for design on July 23, 2015. Notice To Proceed (NTP) was issued on September 1, 2015. The consultant is currently working on Phase-1 (Environmental Clearance and Preliminary Engineering). The utility notification letters has been sent out to impacted utility companies and development of aerial base map has been initiated.

- Doran Street and Broadway/Brazil Safety and Access Project

The Doran Street grade crossing has been identified by the California Public Utilities Commission as one of the most hazardous crossings on the Metrolink system. This project grade separates the crossing and enhances safety and mobility into the area. The project is currently in the Alternative Analysis (AA) phase.

A Project Study Report Equivalent (PSRE) was completed in April 2014. Locally preferred Alternative 2 was approved by the Board in June 2015. This approval required Metro Staff to replace the proposed Fairmont Connector option near the Doran crossing with an option that meets the needs of the community. Metro staff is working with the design consultants, the cities of Glendale and Los Angeles to study options to develop a solution. Meetings have begun with property owners affected by the project.

A contract amendment was issued to the Contractor in September 2014 to complete the engineering

of the interim condition at Doran Street. This one - way westbound configuration will be in place through the development of the grade separation. Meetings have been conducted with emergency responders and the CPUC and a consensus has been reached on the design of the crossing. On December 7, a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) notice of exemption was filed with the Los Angeles county Clerk's office for the interim one-way westbound construction for Doran Street. The general order (GO-88B) application to modify the existing Doran Street rail crossing was submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in December, 2015. Metro will begin the construction procurement process in March 2016 and anticipates that construction of the interim one - way westbound configuration will commence in September 2016.

- L.A. County Grade Crossing and Corridor Safety Program

This is a comprehensive grade crossing and corridor safety program. This project will analyze 110 at-grade crossings and 160 miles of LACMTA owned and Metrolink operated right of way. A strategy for the development of enhancements to the at-grade crossings and the railroad corridors will be part of the work. The program will include recommendations for advancing grade crossings for grade separation. Work has begun in developing the methodology for the effort. We will be reaching out to the cities after the first of the year.

- Raymer to Bernson Double Track

As a result of community concerns about constructing a second mainline track within the Metro Right-of-Way, part of which abuts a residential area, staff have met several times with the community and there will be a further meeting in January 2016.

A public meeting was held in April 2015 to discuss the project progress and to receive input from the community. A second public meeting with the community was held on August 25, 2015. At this meeting, the Metro CEO suspended the project to address community concerns. Staff attended another community meeting with the Sherwood Forest Homeowners Association on September 16, 2015. Some of the concerns raised include noise and vibration, transport of oil trains by freight railroads and safety of trains on double tracks. On December 2, Staff held two community meetings with the residents' local steering committee and the Sherwood Forest Homeowners association. Metro staff will meet with the residential community again on January 13, 2016. Staff will continue to inform the board on ongoing outreach efforts to the community. In response to community requests, Metro hired a consultant to conduct field noise and vibration studies in October. The noise and vibration measurements were conducted at the home of ten volunteers near the Metro right of way in Northridge and at other locations along the railroad right of way in Glendale.

The field noise and vibration studies showed:

- Existing train noise and vibrations are already high
 - Highest noise levels found near crossing (train horns)
 - Existing vibration levels exceed FTA criteria at some locations
 - Readings consistent with earlier modeled estimates
- Rosecrans/Marquardt Grade Separation

This project will grade separate the existing at-grade crossing at the Rosecrans and Marquardt intersection in Santa Fe Springs. This crossing has been ranked No. 1 on the California Public

Utilities Commission (CPUC) Section 190 list as the most hazardous crossing in the state.

This project is related to the 14.7 mile triple track project that the BNSF Railway is constructing in the area. This project will allow the completion of the triple track project and adds capacity to the corridor.

LACMTA Board awarded the contract in March 2015 and Notice to Proceed was issued on April 15, 2015. The consultant has completed the Alternative Development Report, Preliminary Environmental Study, aerial mapping, right-of-way mapping, as well as utility mapping. Public outreach including public workshops and city council meetings have been with cities of Santa Fe Springs, La Mirada, and Gateway Cities Alternative #2 was proposed as the preferred alternative. The consultant is currently working on phase 2 - PS&E including Bridge and Retaining Wall plans, and the Bridge Type Selection Reports.

- Southern California Regional Interconnector Project (SCRIP)
Four to six tracks from the south end of LAUS will be extended across the 101 freeway to connect with the main tracks along the Los Angeles River. This will complete a loop that will allow trains to enter and exit the station at either end, as opposed to the current single entrance and exit point. With this project, the capacity of the station will be significantly increased as well as sharply reduced greenhouse gases associated with idling locomotives.

Modeling of a four-track or six-track configuration has been completed. Both options are seen to provide substantial benefit to the station capacity by doubling the peak period capacity at the station.

The SCRIP was previously developed with the raising of just two platforms and related tracks, showing that the project can be completed and operated without raising the entire yard. However, a separate task was added to the engineering contract to study the effects of raising the entire yard to accommodate the concourse that is part of the Union Station Master Plan as well as identifying any associated operational benefits. The study of the concourse is complete.

Staff is continuing to coordinate the development of SCRIP with the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA). Meetings have been held between the SCRIP team and the CHSRA about accommodating the high speed rail program into the footprint of Union Station. Modeling has been done that shows that this high speed rail can be incorporated into the Union Station rail yard. Discussions are underway as to what this would look like and other issues regarding the joint use of the yard. Further meetings will discuss this further. Staff will come to the Board with a separate item in January.

- Van Nuys Second Platform
Currently, there is only one single side platform serving the two main line tracks at the Amtrak/Metrolink Van Nuys station. A center platform will be constructed, along with a pedestrian underpass to the platform, providing safe access to both main tracks. Preliminary engineering and environmental work are complete. In December 2013 LACMTA received an allocation of \$4M from the CTC for final design. Final design started in July 2014 and ready for bid documents were completed in November 2015.
The construction fund allocation will be requested from the CTC in January 2016. Metro anticipates

construction will start in July 2016. Metro will meet with the communities near the project limits before commencement of construction.

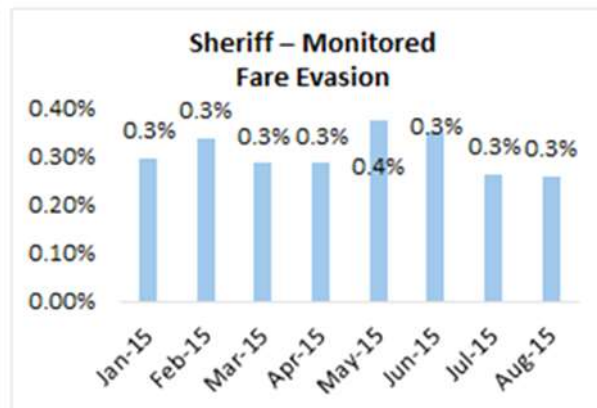
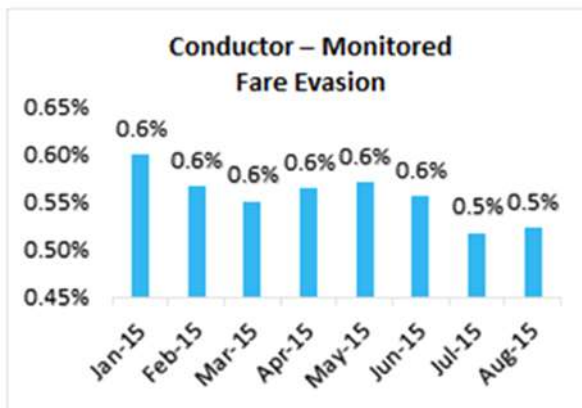
- Transfer of Capital Projects to Metrolink

Staff is working with Metrolink on the transfer of selected projects for completion. An Agreement between the two agencies is being developed that will define the means and methods of how Metro and Metrolink will work together to complete projects. Once completed, this Agreement will come to the Metro Board for a final decision on the transfer of projects to Metrolink. The projects that are being discussed for transfer, initially, are the Raymer to Bernson Second Track Project and the Van Nuys Second Platform Project. Of these projects, the Van Nuys Station project is the most advanced, currently at the 100% design level. Staff is working with Metrolink on the handing over of the Van Nuys Station for construction. This will be subject to Metro Board approval.

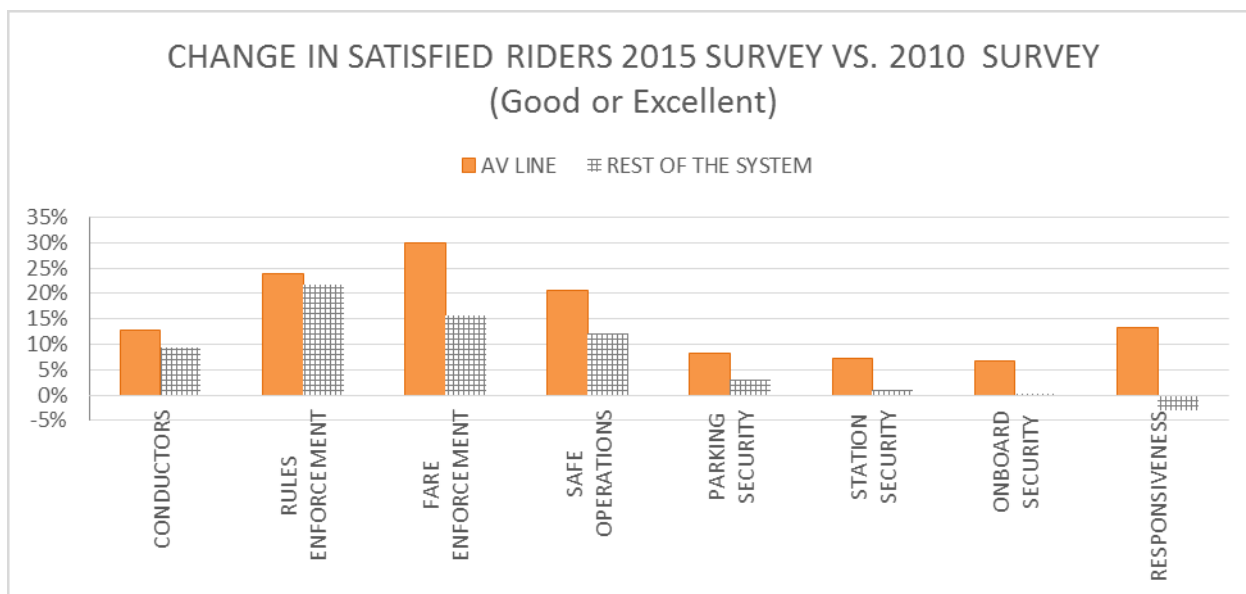
Metrolink Commuter Rail

- Antelope Valley Line (AVL) Second Conductor Program

In December 2014 the Metro board approved funding for additional conductors to provide 100% fare enforcement on the AVL. Previously, fare evasion of the AVL was estimated at 3.4%. Since the initiation of the second conductor program, fare evasion on the AVL has dropped to half a percent.



Additionally, the second conductor program has resulted in improved communication and an enhanced customer experience to the rider. Results of the 2015 on-board survey indicate that since the second conductor program was initiated, customer satisfaction has increased at a higher rate on the AVL than on the other Metrolink lines.



• Antelope Valley Line 25% Fare Reduction Program

The Metro board approved funding for a pilot demonstration program to reduce fares by 25% on the AVL. The program began July 1, 2015 and has proven to be successful. Ticket sales data thru November 2015 indicates that overall ridership on the AVL is up 16% compared to 2014. This ridership growth on the AVL is particularly impressive given that ridership is down on five of the other six Metrolink lines during the same time period.

Month	2014	2015	Change	%
July	101,486	109,450	7,964	7.8%
Aug	100,958	113,703	12,745	12.6%
Sep	99,355	115,909	16,554	16.7%
Oct	99,333	123,617	24,284	24.4%
Nov	97,278	120,710	23,432	24.1%
Sum	498,410	583,389	84,979	17.1%

Revenue on the AVL is down 13%, which is significantly less than 25%, and continues to trend positively.

Month	2014	2015	Change	%
July	\$836,756	\$671,741	(\$165,015)	-19.7%
Aug	\$823,489	\$692,871	(\$130,618)	-15.9%
Sep	\$804,385	\$699,239	(\$105,146)	-13.1%
Oct	\$804,661	\$748,072	(\$56,588)	-7.0%
Nov	\$787,074	\$734,175	(\$52,899)	-6.7%
Sum	\$4,056,364	\$3,546,099	(\$510,265)	-12.6%

Both the AVL second conductor program and 25% fare reduction program are funded thru June 30, 2016. In spring 2016 staff will provide more information and options for the board’s consideration as part of the FY 2016-17 Metrolink budget process.

- Metrolink Financial Update

The Metro Board requested a Cost Benefit Analysis of Metro's subsidy to Metrolink at the December 3, 2015, board meeting with Motion 40. Metro staff is working with Metrolink to complete this request and will report back to the Metro Board in February 2016.

Metro staff is continuing to work with Metrolink to establish a repayment plan of Metro's \$18M loan. Although the loan is not technically due and payable until June 30, 2017, Metrolink has received \$32M in Proposition 1B funds which were to be utilized to repay Metro. This should facilitate repaying Metro before the loan maturity date.

Metrolink's Chief Financial Officer, Sam Joublat resigned his position effective December 31, 2015. Tom Franklin will assume the Interim Chief Financial Officer position while a national search commences for Sam's replacement. Metro looks forward to working with Tom and Elissa Konove, Metrolink's Deputy Chief Executive Officer, to continue progress towards improving Metrolink's financial situation.

- Metrolink Invoices and Billing Issues

After numerous attempts over the last year to resolve \$6M in outstanding Metrolink invoices, Metro staff has reduced our receivable balance to under \$400K. Metro staff has established a path forward with regularly scheduled Metrolink meetings to alleviate future invoicing issues and ensure timely resolution.

Metro staff was informed that Metrolink has a substantial backlog of invoicing to process for member agency reimbursement. Metrolink staff cannot provide Metro staff with a time frame on when to expect these invoices due to Metrolink staffing shortages. Metrolink becoming current on their invoicing would improve their cash flow and draw down Metro approved funding that has not been expended.

- Metrolink Ridership and Revenues for FY 2015-16

For the first quarter of FY 2015-16 (July thru September) Metrolink ridership was 1% below FY2014-15 levels and 1% above budget. Revenues were down 2.8% below FY 2014-15 levels and 2.5% below budget. Much of this revenue loss is attributable to the Antelope Valley Line, which has seen a drop in revenue of \$500K due to the AVL 25% fare reduction program. More detail is available in Attachment B.

- LOSSAN Intercity Rail (Amtrak Pacific Surfliner)

LOSSAN corridor is the second busiest intercity rail corridor in the nation (see Attachment C). There are 41 stations and more than 150 daily passenger trains, with an annual ridership of 2.7 million on Amtrak Pacific Surfliner plus 4.5 million on Metrolink and Coaster commuter rail.

Ridership on the Pacific Surfliner continues to be strong, with 15 consecutive months of year-over-year growth. Revenues are equally strong, with year-over-year increases in 18 of the last 19 months. For FY 2014-15 ridership increased 4%, revenues were up 8%, and farebox recovery was 70% on the Pacific Surfliner. More information is available in Attachment D.

The LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority (JPA) continues to transition management of the Pacific

Surfliner from the State to local control. LOSSAN is in the process of hiring staff and working to implement a robust and coordinated marketing campaign for 2016.

In 2015 LOSSAN was successful in receiving a State cap and trade grant of \$1.7M which will make it easier for riders to transfer from the Pacific Surfliner to connecting local transit. Starting in spring 2016, Metro day passes will be available for sale on board Pacific Surfliner trains at discounted rates. This convenience to the riders will promote and encourage increased ridership on our Metro rail and bus system.

- High Speed Rail

The Governor's budget allocates 25% of Cap and Trade funds to high speed rail. This allows acceleration of the program.

The Supplemental Alternative Analysis work is underway on the Burbank to Palmdale and Burbank to Anaheim segments in L.A. County. The California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) is evaluating an alternative that partially includes LACMTA owned right-of-way as well as one that takes a more direct route between Palmdale and Burbank. LACMTA is developing the Brighton to Roxford Double Track Project in a manner that would be usable under any high speed rail scenario for this corridor. This will minimize or eliminate throw away work.

The Initial Operating Segment terminus, will be located in Burbank near Burbank/Bob Hope Airport. This location further enhances plane to train connections in the region. Furthermore, the CHSRA is accelerating the development of the Palmdale to Burbank segment. Staff is working with the CHSRA to coordinate the development of the high speed rail system with commuter rail along Metro owned right of way.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to develop the projects defined in Attachment A1
- Develop projects for funding under the High Speed Rail MOU

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A-1 -- Regional Rail Capital Projects Status Report

Attachment A-2 - Regional Rail Capital Projects Budget

Attachment B -- Metrolink Ridership Trends

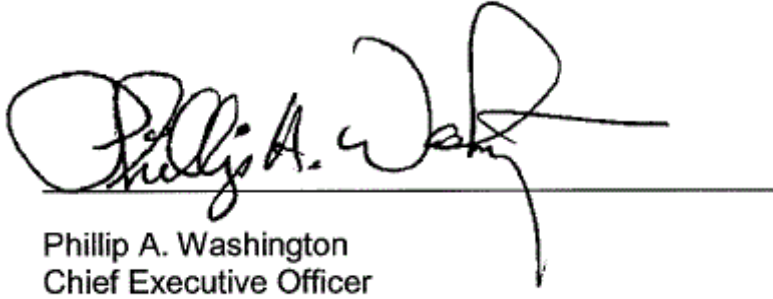
Attachment C -- LOSSAN Corridor Map

Attachment D -- LOSSAN Corridor Trends

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