SUBJECT: HIGH SPEED RAIL THROUGH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ACTION: APPROVE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

RECOMMENDATION

A. Authorize the CEO to execute a memorandum of understanding among eight agencies for the preparation of study, design and construction of high-speed rail through the Southern California region, including identified high-speed rail corridors south of Bakersfield.

B. Support the authorization of $950M in connector projects authorized by Proposition 1A.

ISSUE

A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed between the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), Southern California Associated Governments (SCAG), LACMTA, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG), and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), to address advance investment of up to $1B in southern California as part of CHSRA's commitment to the "Blended Approach" to the construction of the high speed train (HST) system in California.

BACKGROUND

LACMTA is the largest member agency for the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), the operator of the Metrolink commuter rail network. In addition, LACMTA is a member agency of the LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority, and a member agency of SCAG.

LACMTA has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the CHSRA to work collaboratively to develop the high speed rail program in Los Angeles County. In addition, LACMTA is working with CHSRA to develop a MOU to replace that in place to address reimbursement for the efforts of LACMTA to review and approve high speed rail designs in L.A. County and along and within right-of-way owned by LACMTA.

The voters of California passed Proposition 1A in 2008 authorizing the sale of $9.95B in state bonds to partially fund the construction of the high speed train system in
California. That legislation includes $950M in funds for local connectivity projects to the high speed rail system, including approximately $141M for the Regional Connector. The funding for the connectivity projects has not yet been authorized by the CTC.

The CHSRA has programmed approximately $2.4B of the Proposition 1A bond money for a segment in the Central Valley in California referred to as the Initial Construction Segment (ICS). These funds are a local match for $3.6B of Federal ARRA grant money. One of the requirements of this funding is a construction deadline of 2017. The CHSRA believes that this is the segment that is furthest along in development and environmental work and the segment of the system that can meet the federal requirements.

On November 1, 2012 the CHSRA issued its 2012 Draft Business Plan. Within that plan they discuss incremental application of the HST program. In particular, they are referring to the “Blended Approach”. This Blended Approach addresses investment in other locations to link up to the high speed system and provide independent utility through advance construction.

Since mid-2011, LACMTA staff has been working with CHSRA and other agencies as part of the Southern California Passenger Rail Planning Coalition (SCPRPC) to prioritize and coordinate ultimate construction in HSR corridors in southern California. This work has involved Metrolink, Amtrak, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, and the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee. As a part of this effort, comprehensive modeling of the southern California regional rail network was completed that outlined projects that would benefit passenger rail travel in the region. These projects were identified as providing independent utility for HSR and other passenger rail modes, such as grade separations, or as projects that would benefit the passenger rail systems through capacity enhancements in the short term.

LACMTA staff has been working closely with the CHSRA to further develop the Blended Approach to the construction of the HST system as well as the interconnectivity with other systems. In particular, LACMTA was involved with the development of Chapter 2 of the Draft Business Plan that outlines the incremental approach to the project that has become the policy of the CHSRA. In addition, staff has been meeting with CHSRA to further develop the connection of the ICS to southern California that would provide a continuous passenger rail connection between northern and southern California.

At the December meeting the Metro Board passed a motion to develop a list of candidate projects for early investment in Los Angeles County by the California High Speed Rail Authority.

DISCUSSION

SCAG has been developing their Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) outlining the development of transportation in this region. As part of this work, SCAG had created a High Speed Rail Subcommittee to incorporate the developments of that project into the RTP. These efforts were moving forward concurrently with the work of the SCPRPC.
As the Draft RTP emerged it was determined that the work identified as advance work by the SCRPRPC and the other agencies should be incorporated into the Constrained portion of the Draft RTP as opposed to the Strategic portion. However, there was significant discussion that the work of the CHSRA was not currently funded for southern California so it was more prudent to put this work into the Strategic Plan.

From those concerns a motion was approved to require that an MOU be signed between the CHSRA and the seven agencies of southern California providing the following:

- Up to $1B be invested in connectivity and advance investment projects in southern California.
- The funding would benefit passenger travel in Metrolink and LOSSAN corridors.
- The MOU be agreed to by February 1.

Since the passing of this motion, the agencies involved have been working closely to complete the draft MOU. This MOU has not been reviewed by the legal counsel for these agencies.

In addition to the work on the MOU, a parallel effort developed a preliminary list of candidate projects (Attachment B) that would be put forward. It was noted that there may be additional candidate projects that are not yet on the list and is the subject of a meeting in the near future. At the same time, prioritization criteria (Attachment C) was developed that would define the process for funding of these projects.

The MOU will require that the CHSRA will provide $1B in funding from to un-allocated Proposition 1A funds and other sources by 2020. This will not require that projects be completed by that time but that the funding is allocated.

Proposition 1A has specific guidelines regarding the funding of the HSR system. Some of the projects that are on the list may not be eligible for Proposition 1A specific funding. However, the MOU requires an effort by the CHSRA to seek funding for those projects in order to meet the needs of the Blended Approach.

In addition, the MOU specifies that the CHSRA work with the California Transportation Commission to authorize the $950M for funding of local connectivity projects in accordance with Proposition 1A.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

There are no known financial impacts at this time. There may be a requirement for local match for some projects depending on the funding source. An analysis of the requirements of the funding will be analyzed based on the source and the nature of the project as the funding becomes available.

NEXT STEPS
Staff will work with the other agencies to refine the MOU. Staff will work with the parties to refine and/or add to the project list.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A – DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE PREPARATION OF STUDY, DESIGN, AND CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL THROUGH THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION, INCLUDING IDENTIFIED HIGH-SPEED RAIL CORRIDORS SOUTH OF BAKERSFIELD.

Attachment B - POTENTIAL EARLY INVESTMENT PROJECTS THAT SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED TRAIN

Attachment C – DRAFT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR DRAFT CANDIDATE PROJECT LIST UNDER REVIEW BY MOU PARTIES

Prepared by: Don Sepulveda, Executive Officer – Regional Rail
Don A. Sepulveda, P.E.
Executive Officer, Regional Rail

Paul C. Taylor
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer
DRAFT MOU

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONTRACT # XXXXXX

BY AND BETWEEN

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY (CHSRA);
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (SCAG);
LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (Metro);
ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (OCTA);
RIVERSIDE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (RCTC);
SAN DIEGO ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (SANDAG);
SAN BERNARDINO ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS (SANBAG); and
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL RAIL AUTHORITY (METROLINK),

COLLECTIVELY REFERRED TO HEREIN AS THE “PARTIES”, FOR THE PREPARATION OF STUDY, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL THROUGH THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGION, INCLUDING IDENTIFIED HIGH-SPEED RAIL CORRIDORS SOUTH OF BAKERSFIELD.

RECITALS:

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) is responsible for planning, building and maintaining an 800-mile statewide high-speed rail system, providing more than 600,000 jobs and improved mobility through the development of safe, clean, reliable rail technology; and

Whereas, CHSRA, in partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration has completed and certified a Program EIR/EIS for a proposed California High-Speed Train (HST) network linking the major metropolitan areas of the State of California, and the HST system approved by the CHSRA includes corridors into and through Southern California; and

Whereas, the CHSRA’s responsibility for planning, construction and operation of high-speed passenger train service in California is exclusively granted to CHSRA by PUC Section 185032.a.2; and

Whereas, the CHSRA is charged with accepting grants, fees and allocations from the state, from political subdivisions of the state and from the federal government, foreign governments, and private sources (PUC section 185034(4)); and
 Whereas, the CHSRA DRAFT 2012 Business Plan proposes to incrementally develop the HST utilizing a blended system and blended operations involving coordinated passenger rail system development and operations with existing passenger rail systems, and this emphasis reflects the recognition that a key to success in developing the statewide rail network, including the high-speed system, is in coordinated infrastructure development that improves, enhances and expands the integration of high-speed and regional/local passenger rail systems; and

 Whereas, this blended approach requires a series of incremental investments in local rail corridors to prepare for integrated service and operations and the CHSRA recognizes the need for a collaborative effort with regional and local agencies to identify early investment projects along existing rail corridors, that increase speed, improve safety and efficiency, and create linkages between HST and local passenger rail service; and

 Whereas, local transportation improvement projects are required to be included in a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and both the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) are each charged with developing a RTP every four years for their respective regions to provide guidance for transportation investments within each region, and development of regional transportation strategies to address the regions’ mobility needs; and

 Whereas, SCAG adopted the 2008 RTP to identify the facilities, services and programs necessary to meet the SCAG region’s travel needs through the year 2035, and that document recognizes the need for HSR ground transportation to serve these needs; and

 Whereas, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375, Steinberg, Statutes of 2008) requires subsequent RTPs to include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), showing evidence of integrated planning, goals that establish and strengthen the crucial linkages between the economy, land use development and regional transportation system to improve access to jobs, education, healthcare, and regional amenities in ways that improve the overall quality of life in the region; and

 Whereas, the DRAFT 2012 SCAG RTP identifies Phase 1 of the California High-Speed Rail program in the constrained plan to facilitate the development of HSR early investment projects in passenger rail corridors in the SCAG region and that the HST development objectives are consistent with achieving SB 375 goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 8 percent per capita by 2020 and 16% by 2035; and

 Whereas, SANDAG adopted the 2050 RTP on October 28, 2011, including a SCS, with similar transportation goals and including the Authority’s Phase 2 Los Angeles to San Diego via Inland Empire HST corridor in its constrained plan and extensive capital and operations improvements along the San Diego segment of the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) rail corridor, the nation’s second busiest passenger rail corridor, and

 Whereas, the CHSRA already had an MOU in place with SCAG, Metro, OCTA, RTC, SANDAG, SANBAG, California Department of Transportation, Division of Rail, and the San Diego County Regional Airport
Authority that guide discussion and participation in the collaborative development of technical studies, sharing of technical information, and regional outreach coordination; and

Whereas, Metro, OCTA, SANDAG, SANBAG, RCTC and Metrolink are involved in the planning, funding, construction and/or operation of heavy and light rail transit, buses, and/or commuter train services in Los Angeles/Orange/Riverside/SANBAG/San Diego counties and are considering intermodal service integration, including linkages to the proposed HST service; and

Whereas, it is the intent and purpose of this MOU to strengthen the working relationship between CHSRA and the Parties to facilitate the development and implementation of passenger rail improvements that will improve local passenger rail service and operations while preparing designated HST corridors for eventual HST operation to achieve region-wide systems integration of rail service in Southern California; and

Whereas, the PARTIES also intend to communicate and coordinate with rail operators such as Metrolink, Amtrak, Burlington Northern & Santa Fe, Union Pacific Railroad and Caltrans' Division of Rail in the development and implementation of rail improvements and enhancements; and to include them in the California State Rail Plan.

Now, THEREFORE, it is mutually understood and agreed to by the PARTIES as follows:

1. To collaboratively agree to the statement of purpose of the MOU in order to identify and move forward with a program of early investments in the regional and local rail systems to facilitate the blended approach as described in Chapter 2 of the CHSRA Draft 2012 Business plan regarding coordination of increasing interregional connectivity of the existing systems (rail, bus, airports, and highways).

2. Parties to this MOU agree to support improved rail operations in Southern California in a manner that is in keeping with the statutory requirements of Proposition 1A, and that prioritized projects supported by this MOU will emphasize the need to improve speed and operations into Southern California.

   Parties to the MOU agree to collaboratively partner in delivering the California High-Speed Rail project to Southern California as a whole by supporting efforts to obtain funding, enhance stakeholder support, secure environmental clearance and all other aspects that will move the implementation of Proposition 1A and all it endeavors to achieve.

3. Parties to this MOU agree to collaboratively improve and increase community outreach in Southern California to improve community understanding and support of the HSRA Business Plan and proposed projects in Southern California.

4. This MOU establishes a framework for the recommendation of candidate improvement projects for consideration for funding and implementation. The framework includes the application of performance-based criteria to prioritize candidate projects, select projects for funding consideration, and a process for the Parties to achieve regional consensus on the projects to be recommended to CHSRA for funding. A subsequent project level MOU (or other agreement(s)
may be developed to specify the details of approved projects that implement the goals of this MOU.

6. The PARTIES agree to work together through the Southern California Passenger Rail Planning Coalition to develop, refine and update the project development and selection process for projects that may be funded in whole or in part by the CHSRA that will be reviewed and approved by the Regional Chief Executive Officer’s Group, which is comprised of parties to this MOU.

7. The PARTIES have developed a list of candidate rail improvement and enhancement projects attached hereto as Attachment A. This list of projects will be further refined to prioritize these projects both according to their utility and extent that they achieve the goals identified in the CSHRA’s 2012 Business Plan in implementing projects related to the “Blended Systems and Blended Operations” concept. The projects are consistent with the CSHRA’s phased implementation strategy for developing the statewide High-Speed System. The candidate project list will be used to develop a “Prioritized Rail Improvement List” (PRIL) for a region-wide series of rail improvements and enhancements, including work on Phase 1 High-Speed Rail corridors and on feeder rail corridors that support the Blended Systems/Blended Operations model.

8. Attachment B details the performance criteria that will be used to review the candidate rail project list and refine the list through collaboration with the PARTIES to develop the PRIL. The PRIL will be completed, including approval of said list by all respective participating governing Boards of the PARTIES, by June, 2012.

9. The PRIL is intended to be incorporated into the California State Rail Plan as applicable.

10. PARTIES will utilize the PRIL to develop a specific funding plan, including investment by the California High-Speed Rail Authority, State and, and federal matching funds based upon an agreed strategy.

   a. CHSRA will work with the other parties to the MOU to seek early approval and release of the $950 million already committed to interregional service statewide.
   b. CHSRA will commit an additional $1 billion in unallocated Prop 1A funds to implement the PRIL projects that meet the performance criteria identified in Attachment B by 2020.
   c. CHSRA will work with necessary funding partners (state, private, and federal) to assist in seeking and releasing the funds necessary to implement the PRIL projects. Local agencies may provide local funds, real property or in-kind resources as matching funds where matching funds are required to qualify for grant funding. PARTIES agree to work together to identify appropriate amounts and types of local resources that may be used to support a specific PRIL project.
   d. CHSRA and appropriate local agencies will coordinate to obtain federal and private funding using a mutually agreed upon strategic approach. In the event that funding for the HST program is constrained by statute, rescission of existing law, change in funding requirements or eligibility, reduction in funding level or availability, the CSHRA shall
notify the Parties in a timely manner of same and provide a statement of impact of such change on the prioritized candidate list.

11. In the event that the funding provided for under this MOU is not approved by the CHSRA by 2020, the MOU is deemed to be terminated effective thirty (30) days upon notice by CHSRA.

12. Any non-CHSRA Party may withdraw from this MOU at any time prior to notice of a grant award for a PRIL project by giving notice to the other parties of the MOU of such termination (including the effective termination date) at least thirty (30) calendar days before the effective date of such termination.

13. If through any cause, the CSHRA shall fail to fulfill in a timely and proper manner its obligations under this MOU regarding approval of the prioritized candidate list or the PRIL, the other parties to the MOU shall thereupon have the right to withdraw from the MOU by giving not less than thirty (30) days written notice of the intent to terminate and specifying the effective date thereof.
## Potential Early Investment Projects that Support Development of the California High Speed Train

### Category: Grade Crossing/Safety Improvements

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### Category: Facility/Operational Improvements

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### Total

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</table>
Attachment B

DRAFT

Performance Criteria for Draft Candidate Project List

Under Review by MOU Parties

- Improved Speed/Performance
- Improved Operations
- Utility for Future HST System
- Independent Utility
- Connectivity to the HST System/Linkages
- Capacity Increase by Double Tracking
- PUC Ranking (Grade Crossing)
- Safety Improvements to Increase Speed
- Funding Matches (Contingent by Legislature Budget Allocation)
- Fits within Statutory Requirements for Funding
- Local Minimum/Regional Benefit
- Project Readiness by 2020

Note; Reflects CEO/Agency comments as of January 3, 2012
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS' DRAFT 2012 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/ SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

ACTION: APPROVE COMMENT LETTER

RECOMMENDATION

Approve our comment letter on the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Draft 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

ISSUE

In December 2011, SCAG released the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS for public comment. The RTP/SCS identifies regional transportation priorities for the six-county region through 2035. All 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) projects and priorities must be included in SCAG's RTP/SCS to be eligible for federal funds. We have reviewed the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS and Board authorization is being requested to transmit our comments to SCAG in time for their February 14, 2012 deadline.

DISCUSSION

As part of SCAG's role as a regional planning agency, they are responsible for addressing regional issues in the six-county area of Southern California. The 2012 RTP/SCS is the vehicle to provide solutions to regional mobility and land-use issues. For better integration of land-use and transportation, it must also demonstrate reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGe) from passenger vehicles. Per the requirements of SB 375, the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS includes Southern California's first SCS. The SCS is required to analyze how the collective impact of transportation policies, transportation investments and land-use policies affect the GHGe based on population projections in 2020 and 2035. Transportation issues are primarily addressed in the RTP portion of the Draft, and the SCS portion of the Draft presents strategies to meet GHGe targets.
SB 375 compelled SCAG to conduct a more extensive outreach process than has been historically required for RTP development. This process yielded unprecedented levels of public participation and engagement, particularly among environmental and public health advocates championing increased funding for active transportation to reduce GHG emissions and provide great opportunities for physical activity. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health was a leading voice in this advocacy.

Regional Transportation Plan

In general, the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS is a well-written document that properly identifies many of the key transportation issues that the region is facing. It includes all of the projects and programs in our 2009 LRTP. SCAG has proposed new and innovative sources of funding beyond our LRTP program. These funds are for additional projects, regional maintenance of highway and transit facilities, and meeting Federal Clean Air Act conformity requirements.

There are new transportation projects proposed in the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS, within Los Angeles County, which are beyond revenues that the 2009 LRTP assumes to be available from traditional sources. Some of these projects are listed in the Key Projects subsection below. SCAG is assuming that these new projects are funded with a combination of innovative funding (e.g., container fees and public private partnerships) and increased revenues (e.g. gas tax changes and user-fee per mile).

The Draft 2012 RTP/SCS proposes targeted improvements in the transit network and increases in funding for Transportation Demand Management (TDM), Transportation System Management (TSM), and Active Transportation beyond the levels included in the six county transportation commissions’ plans, including our 2009 LRTP.

Funding for these improvements is anticipated from a $0.15 per gallon increase in the gas tax starting in 2017 and ending entirely in 2024. After the gas tax phase-out in 2024, a proposed user-tax of $0.05 per mile driven, will be phased-in starting in 2025. The goal of the incremental phase-in is so that consumers will not have any large increases of taxes, yet also allow for an indexing to cover the increasing maintenance costs, due to the gas taxes not being indexed to inflation and not increasing with costs.

Key Projects beyond the LRTP

The following lists Los Angeles County projects identified in the Draft RTP that are not identified in the 2009 LRTP

- East-West Freight Corridor will be studied along a five mile band generally following the SR-60 corridor between the I-710 and the I-15.
- Phase I of the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) is in the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS in the Constrained Plan, pending an agreement between CHSRA,
Metrolink and LOSSAN to identify funds to bring local systems up to high speed (110+ MPH) where possible.

- A regional Express/HOT Lane Network that expands our Fast Lanes pilot project to include the I-405 and SR-91. This is beyond the federally funded pilot studies on I-10 and the I-110. The Board is on record supporting these two pilot projects, as well as studying the feasibility of a HOT lane on the I-405 from the Orange County Line to LAX.

Key Issues

There are several emerging issues that the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS addresses:

- A cordon pricing pilot project feasibility study to be developed with the City of Los Angeles that is included under TDM Measures, and Major Strategic Projects.

- Decreased funding available from federal and state sources and the need to identify new revenue sources is a key RTP concern. SCAG proposes to index the gas tax and to incrementally phase-in user-fees to replace the gas tax starting in 2025.

- The exponential cost of deferred maintenance on highway and transit systems, the need to maintain the regional system in a state of good repair, and the need for additional operations and maintenance funding, is also a key RTP concern.

- The region is anticipated to experience increasing energy costs – residential energy and water use is forecasted as $19,000 a year in 2035, and the strategies in the SCS reduce it to $16,000.

Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Draft 2012 RTP/SCS demonstrates that the region will achieve the GHGe reduction targets established for the region by the State of California Air Resources Board (ARB), as a requirement of California’s Sustainable Communities and Climate Change Protection Act, or Senate Bill (SB) 375.

In addition to the transportation elements of the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS, the plan includes a land-use element that was developed in coordination with local jurisdictions. The land-use element responds to the region’s changing demographics and housing market demand. It recommends a growth scenario that will more than double the share of households living in corridors that have frequent transit service by 2035. This land-use element is projected to increase the competitiveness of transit service and reduce vehicle miles travelled.

The land-use element in combination with transportation policies, such as the user tax per mile fee, and transportation investments (such as TDM, TSM and active
transportation), support the region in achieving the mandated ARB targets. The Draft 2012 RTP/SCS provides a projected 8% reduction in GHGe by 2020 and a 16% reduction in GHGe by 2035.

The SCS portion includes policies to increase the number of near-zero and zero emission vehicles operating within the region to reduce GHGe, improve air quality and lessen the region’s dependency on fossil fuels.

The Draft 2012 RTP/SCS includes $6 billion for active transportation, a significant increase from $1.8 billion in the 2008 RTP. It acknowledges that additional analysis regarding active transportation needs to be conducted in order to develop a better understanding of the users and their needs (bicyclists and pedestrians). In cooperation with SCAG, we have initiated a joint study to develop a strategy to address first-last mile connections to transit in Los Angeles County.

The technical appendices to the Draft 2012 RTP were not available for staff review at the time of the writing of this Board report. Additional technical comments on these appendices may be added to the draft letter.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The comment letter on the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS will not have any adverse safety impacts for our employees and patrons.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no impact on the FY 2012 budget, as we are only submitting a comment letter to SCAG on their Draft 2012 RTP/SCS.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board can modify or choose not to release a formal comment letter. The alternative of not sending a letter is not recommended, as we would lose the opportunity to provide SCAG with comments to enhance the 2012 RTP/SCS document.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, the comment letter will be transmitted to SCAG for their consideration in developing their Final 2012 RTP/SCS. SCAG is scheduled to adopt their Final 2012 RTP/SCS at their April 2012 General Assembly meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Draft comment letter to SCAG

Prepared by: Brad McAllester, Executive Officer, Long Range Planning
             Heather Hills, Director, Long Range Planning
             Lori Abrishami, Planning Manager, Long Range Planning
Martha Welborne, FAIA
Executive Director of Countywide Planning

Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer
February 14, 2012

Hasan Ikhrata, Executive Director
Southern California Association of Governments
818 West Seventh Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435

Dear Mr. Ikhrata:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Southern California Association of Governments’ (SCAG) Draft 2012 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP/SCS).

We would also like to compliment SCAG on the immense stakeholder outreach process that was undertaken to develop the RTP/SCS in conjunction with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), in order to develop this draft RTP/SCS. We find the document to be well-written in identifying many of the key challenges our region faces.

Attached for your consideration are our comments on the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS.

Again, SCAG has made an exceptional document from a challenging set of requirements, and we commend you.

Sincerely,

Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment
Comments on Draft 2012 Regional Transportation Plan

- We commend SCAG for the significant and unprecedented outreach to MTA, sub-regional agencies, and the public in the development of the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS. We also acknowledge the extensive and dedicated effort on the part of SCAG to craft a Southern California approach to the new SCS requirements of SB 375. We are pleased that the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS has been able to meet both the air quality conformity requirements of the federal Clean Air Act, and green house gas emission (GHGe) reduction requirements necessary to comply with SB 375.

- We appreciate the working relationship between SCAG and MTA staff necessary to integrate our 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) projects, programs, and financial assumptions into the Draft 2012 RTP. It appears that the Draft 2012 RTP includes all projects and programs funded by MTA in the 2009 LRTP. We note that SCAG has identified a number of projects and programs that are beyond funding levels of the LRTP. We assume that these projects and programs will be funded through new or innovative funding programs that SCAG has identified in the Draft 2012 RTP as “reasonably available” funding sources over the life of the RTP. Examples of projects beyond the funded LRTP include:

  - East-West Freight Corridor between the I-710 and the I-15.
  - Phase 1 of the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), pending an agreement between CHSRA, Metrolink and LOSSAN to identify funds to bring local systems up to high speed (110+ MPH) where possible.
  - A regional Express/HOT Lane Network that expands our Fast Lanes pilot project to include the I-405 and SR-91.
  - Various modal programs, including bus and rail expansion, TDM, TSM, bicycle, pedestrian, and operations and maintenance.
  - MTA has proposed and is advocating a program known as America Fast Forward (formerly known as the 30/10 Initiative) to look at federal loan and bonding mechanisms which could accelerate the completion of 12 transit projects in 10 years instead of 30 years. We believe that such a program is beneficial to Southern California counties that have a tradition of self-help local sales tax mechanisms, and that those self-help traditions should be rewarded through new federal bonding or loan assistance programs. Clearly this program would assist the region in the earlier attainment of federal and state air quality conformity and GHGe reduction requirements.
We would recommend that a section be included in the Draft 2012 RTP regarding America Fast Forward, and that this section include SCAG policies and actions to partner with MTA and other county transportation commissions to support and advocate for federal enactment of this program.

Additional Technical Comments on SCAG Draft 2012 RTP/SCS

- We note that page 50, paragraph 3 states that “our region has virtually no bus lanes, especially compared to other major metropolitan areas.” We would suggest that this reference be revised to acknowledge that MTA has opened the highly successful Orange Line busway, has federal approval of a Very Small Start Grant to implement bus lanes on Wilshire Boulevard, and that the MTA Board has recently directed staff to conduct a countywide transit study to identify a minimum of five additional bus lane candidate projects. Additionally, we have been operating dedicated bus services for some time on the El Monte Busway and on the Harbor Transitway.

- The Transit Policies on page 50 and the SCS chapter make reference to High Quality Transit Opportunity Areas (HQTAs). We would encourage SCAG to identify in the Draft 2012 RTP the specific areas that will be designated as HQTAs and the benefit of this designation.

- On page 66, in the paragraph on “Logistics activities – including warehouse and distribution facilities”, we would suggest adding that warehouses and distribution centers also perform value-added services to prepare goods for retail sale, such as packaging and adding of accessories. These services also create jobs for the SCAG region.

- On page 67, in the section “Components of the Regional Goods Movement System”, we would encourage SCAG to add rail intermodal facilities (ICTF, Hobart, etc.) as a separate bullet point for two reasons. First, they play a significant role in the goods movement system, while also generating traffic and environmental impacts. Second, they are mentioned as a component of the rail improvement strategy (ICTF and SCIG are specifically mentioned).

- On page 71, it should clarify in the text that even though the specific alignment has yet to be determined, the east-west freight corridor would generally parallel the UP Los Angeles subdivision/SR-60 between the I-710 and I-605, San Jose Creek/SR-60 between the I-605 and SR-57, and the SR-60 east of the SR-57.
On page 71, the text states the benefits of an east-west corridor, but SCAG may also want to state why this corridor was selected over the 210, 91, and 10 using information contained in the Comprehensive Goods Movement Study.

On page 71, SCAG may want to highlight that the east-west freight corridor is envisioned to be a clean freight corridor similar to that which would be built on the I-710.

On page 72, we suggest that the bottleneck relief strategy report should be included in the technical appendix and footnoted in the “Bottleneck Relief Strategy” section.

On page 72, SCAG may want to add another paragraph on smaller-scale, near-term goods movement improvements, such as truck climbing lanes on the I-5 and arterial improvements throughout the region.

On page 74, under Key Rail Projects in the Draft 2012 RTP, we encourage SCAG to highlight the ACE San Gabriel Trench, as it is the largest and most significant ACE grade separation project ($498 million).

We concur that the Orangeline High-Speed Transit corridor improvement from Union Station to Palmdale is in the Strategic (unfunded) portion of the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS.

Passenger and High Speed Rail Comments Starting on Page 51

We suggest that SCAG add a definition of the acronym "LOSSAN".

To clarify which draft CA HSR Business Plan is being referred to, SCAG may want to add the 2012 date.

SCAG may want to indicate that the CA HSR is estimated to reach our region with the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) in 2021, and the Bay to Basin phase in 2026. Furthermore, it should be clarified in other locations in the document, that the IOS will connect to southern California's network in 2021.

Since the actual speeds for the system will vary by location, SCAG may want to remove the reference to the definition of 110 MPH for the CA HSR system.

On page 51, subsection “Implementation of Phase 1 of the California High-Speed Train (HST) Project”, SCAG may want to define which “Authority” is being discussed.
• We request that SCAG clarify that Prop. 1A will allocate $9.95 billion in funding for the project (the current Draft reads almost $1 billion less: "$9 billion").

• We suggest that SCAG state that the $950 million in funding needs to be allocated by the State. Furthermore, a Memorandum of Understanding is anticipated between the CAHSRA and southern California agencies to identify funds for the region for advance investment in high speed rail corridors and connections.

• On page 52, we suggest that SCAG provide a definition or description of "grade closures".

• We suggest a source of where the LOSSAN strategies are from, to provide clarity.

• Starting at the bottom of page 52, in the section "Improvements to the Existing Metrolink System", we note that positive train control is not a "strategy", it is mandated by Federal law. SCAG may want to add that Metrolink will incorporate this developing technology two to three years ahead of the rest of the nation's passenger railroads.

• The term "speed capacity improvements" needs to be clarified: either it is a "speed improvement" or a "capacity improvement".

• The second paragraph on page 53 suggests that Metrolink will be connected in 2035 when the HST reaches the Central Valley. We suggest rewording the paragraph to be in accordance with Metrolink's operational area and the California High Speed Rail Authority's Business Plan.

• Furthermore, the final sentence in this paragraph implies that it is known what would be needed for travel times of one hour. This is under study regarding the feasibility for Metrolink operations. We ask that SCAG state that there may be significant costs and impacts of such an option.