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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 15, 2012**

SUBJECT: REGIONAL RAIL UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the Regional Rail Update through January 2012.

ISSUE

The Regional Rail unit 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 team also coordinates capital improvement projects along the LACMTA owned railroad right-of-way. This report provides a monthly update on commuter, intercity, and high speed rail issues of importance to the Board.

BACKGROUND

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 43,000 riders per day throughout the Los Angeles basin.

LACMTA is also a member of the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) joint powers authority, which coordinates the passenger rail services of the three carriers (Amtrak, Metrolink, and COASTER) within this corridor. LOSSAN is working towards gaining local management of the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner service in this corridor.

LACMTA is also 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.

ISSUES

Metrolink Commuter Rail

Metro staff has been working closely with Metrolink staff to develop projects and facilitate maintenance of Metro owned right-of-way. Regular meetings are taking place to discuss grade crossings, project priorities, strategic items, and overall service options.

- **Antelope Valley Line Study**

In April 2011 the Board approved a consultant study to recommend and prioritize safety and infrastructure improvements to operate faster and more reliable Metrolink service on the Antelope Valley Line (AVL) between Lancaster and Los Angeles Union Station. The AVL is the third busiest in the Metrolink system and operates solely in Los Angeles County. The goal is to improve service frequencies and operate 30 minute service to Santa Clarita and one hour service to Lancaster. Some of the improvements likely to be recommended include additional sidings, double track, grade separations, and signal improvements.

The study is approximately 60% complete and on schedule for presentation to the Board in March 2012. A draft report has been submitted by the consultant.

Staff is also working to develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a railroad planning bench to facilitate the additional Metrolink corridor studies and other capital projects. This will be important as Metro assumes more of the responsibility for managing design and construction of capital projects along our railroad right-of-way.

- **Metrolink Fleet Management Plan**

In January 2012, the SCRRA Board adopted a Fleet Management Plan. The plan lays out a path forward for SCRRA to upgrade and rehabilitate 30 of its 52 locomotives to Tier 4 levels to meet Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air quality requirements. Once implemented, the majority of SCRRA's locomotives will be the latest technology, cleanest burning locomotives in the nation.

The costs to implement the Fleet Management Plan are identified at approximately \$126 million. To finance the Fleet Management Plan, SCRRA has identified various funding sources, including South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Carl Moyer funds, which could fund up to 70% of eligible costs to upgrade to Tier 4. SCRRA also plans to use Prop. 1B Public Transit Modernization Improvement Safety and Efficiency Account (PTMISEA) funds, member agency rehabilitation funds, and sell 23 surplus older Generation 2 Sentinel rail cars.

If all anticipated funding materializes, the Fleet Management Plan could be accomplished with minimal impacts to the member agencies. If the funding does

not materialize, or the new Tier 4 technology costs prove to be higher than the initial estimates, the member agencies could face additional financial exposure.

- Positive Train Control (PTC)

PTC is a federally mandated safety system which is intended to prevent train-to-train collisions, over speed accidents, incursion into work zones and movements through a misaligned switch by requiring automatic control systems to override human error. The budget for PTC is approximately \$210 million. Currently PTC is fully funded.

The PTC project continues to experience delays do to national interoperability standards, bandwidth licensing, which is presently in court, and technology development for radios. Nevertheless, PTC is scheduled for implementation on SCRRRA territory by summer 2013, well in advance of the December 2015 federal mandate.

- Doran Street Improvements

The LACMTA Board passed a motion to allocate \$6.6M for enhancements to the Doran Street at-grade crossing. This crossing is located on the Los Angeles and Glendale border and involves both cities, Metrolink, and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). There have been attempts to close the crossing. Currently this crossing is the subject of administrative action by the CPUC.

Staff has been working with the parties to move forward with a course of action regarding this crossing. As part of this effort, staff has been seeking additional funding for a grade separation at this crossing. Specifically, a scope of work was submitted for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for this grade separation.

- Rail-to-Rail (R2R) Program

R2R enables Metrolink and Pacific Surfliner monthly pass holders to use either service at no additional cost. This popular program provides riders on the Orange County and Ventura County lines with additional rail travel options and added convenience. Approximately 500,000 (18%) of the Pacific Surfliner's 2.8 million annual boardings are R2R passengers. SCRRRA compensates Caltrans Division of Rail up to \$1.3 million annually for R2R.

Caltrans and Amtrak have been negotiating with SCRRRA and its member agencies to renew the R2R agreement. Metrolink's position is that R2R riders fill otherwise empty seats on Amtrak. Caltrans and Amtrak's position is that certain trains are overcrowded and Amtrak should be compensated at a higher reimbursement rate.

Both SCRRRA and Caltrans are committed to maintaining R2R as is until a new program is agreed to. A solution has been agreed to by both parties that will maintain the service.

- Bus Bridge Coordination

Accidents, mechanical breakdowns, signal malfunctions and other emergency situations create delays on Metrolink. When this occurs, Metrolink provides alternative transportation to get riders to their destination. Despite local resources in the affected area, Metro buses have been requested to assist with transportation. Metro buses are routinely sent to San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange County, and outlying areas, inconveniencing passengers in excess of two hours.

Metrolink is working with Metro and the other member agencies to create an action plan to reduce passenger wait time. The action plan should be completed in February 2012.

- Ridership and Revenue Update

Metrolink ridership and revenues are tracking close to expected for FY 2011-12, in spite of the continued 12% unemployment rate in LA County. Ridership for July thru December is up 9% year-over-year and revenues are up 6%. Ridership is 2% over budget for FY 2011-12 and revenues are down 2% compared to the budget for FY 2011-12.

METROLINK FY 2011-12 YEAR-TO-DATE THRU 12/31/11						
	RIDERSHIP			REVENUES		
	FY 11	FY 12	CHANGE	FY 11	FY 12	CHANGE
TOTAL	5,400,050	5,865,858	+ 9%	\$36,634,688	\$38,849,286	+ 6%

LOSSAN Intercity Rail (Amtrak Pacific Surfliner)

- LOSSAN Governance Issues

In August 2011 the LOSSAN Board approved in concept a framework for local authority to manage the state-supported intercity passenger rail service (Amtrak Pacific Surfliner). Local governance of the service will provide for local decision making and the following advantages:

- Places management with those that understand the corridor
- Allows easier coordination of passenger rail services
- Provides for more efficient management
- Will develop a more customer oriented service plan

A CEO-led team is working to further develop the business financial case, draft legislation, and governance framework. A bill would be introduced in early 2012 and if signed into law, the new, locally controlled LOSSAN agency could assume its new duties in January 2013. The CEOs are meeting regularly to work out the issues related to the legislation and overall management of the service.

- Short and Long Term Service Plans

LOSSAN is in the midst of a study to evaluate operational feasibility, service levels and ridership impacts for future service along the LOSSAN corridor. The following table shows current levels of service (2011), and short term (2014) and long term (2030) levels and ridership projections for the corridor. Assuming various capital improvements estimated at \$1.8 billion (2011 dollars) are made, service levels would almost double between the present and 2030.

Weekday Service Levels	# of Trains		
	2011 Baseline	2014 Short-term	2030 Long-term
Commuter (San Diego-Oceanside)	22	32	54
Commuter (OC-LA)	42	54	86
Commuter (North of LA)	61	64	98
Pacific Surfliner	22	24	36
Long Distance Amtrak	4	4	6
TOTAL:	151	178	280

Ridership would increase by approximately 50% compared to the present.

Ridership (millions)	2011	2014	2030
	Baseline	Short-term	Long-term
Commuter	4.90	5.36	10.45
Pacific Surfliner	2.80	3.06	4.75
TOTAL:	7.70	8.42	15.20

- Amtrak Pacific Surfliner Operating Statistics

The LOSSAN corridor is the second busiest intercity rail corridor in the nation. Amtrak Pacific Surfliner ridership for FY 2010-11 was 2.8 million boardings, a 7% increase over the prior year, and the second highest total in Pacific Surfliner history. Revenues were up 12% over the prior year.

Ridership on the Pacific Surfliner experienced a decline for the first quarter of FY 2011-12. For October 2011 thru December 2011, ridership declined for three consecutive months, compared to the prior year. Amtrak states that this is primarily due to weekend track work that affected service between San Diego and Los Angeles. Staff will continue to monitor this negative trend.

PACIFIC SURFLINER RIDERSHIP			
	2010	2011	Change
October	219,284	203,383	- 7%
November	220,782	204,923	- 7%
December	197,656	190,343	- 4%

In spite of lower ridership, revenues have continued to increase during the same time frame. This is due, in part, to the elimination of some off-peak fares during the fall and winter. Now, peak fares are in place throughout the whole year.

PACIFIC SURFLINER REVENUES (MILLIONS)			
	2010	2011	Change
October	\$4.0	\$4.3	+ 8%
November	\$4.5	\$4.8	+ 7%
December	\$3.9	\$4.4	+ 13%

Pacific Surfliner on time performance averaged 77% for October thru December, which is less than the 85% goal for the corridor. The Customer Satisfaction Index for the LOSSAN corridor is 86%, which is less than the 89% Surfliner goal, but on track with the nationwide Amtrak 86% average. Most of the customer complaints are in the areas of food variety/quality, and cleanliness of restrooms and train windows.

HIGH SPEED RAIL (HSR)

- **Business Plan**

The California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) released the Draft 2012 Business Plan on November 1, 2011. Staff had worked closely with the CHSRA in the development of the "blended approach" referred to in the plan. Since the release of the plan, staff has been working closely with CHSRA to develop solutions to high speed rail and intercity connections between northern and southern California. Staff submitted comments on the Business Plan. These comments stressed that the CHSRA needs to partner closely with the communities in Los Angeles County to develop the system. In addition, we have stressed that the CHSRA needs to develop a connection to Palmdale that would link northern and southern California by rail.

Of particular note is the work that staff has been doing with CHSRA and other agencies in southern California to develop priority projects for advance investment. These projects include capacity and safety enhancements along high speed rail corridors in addition to feeder connections. A list is being developed as part of a Memorandum of Understanding between these southern California agencies and CHSRA for the advance investment of up to \$1B in the region from yet to be determined sources. The LACMTA Board discussed this MOU at the January 26, 2012 Board meeting.

In addition to this work, staff has been discussing the programming of funds allocated to agencies as part of the Proposition 1A measure. This measure identified \$950M to be used for connectivity projects to high speed rail. LACMTA has funds in that measure allocated for the Regional Connector.

- I-5/Grapevine Study

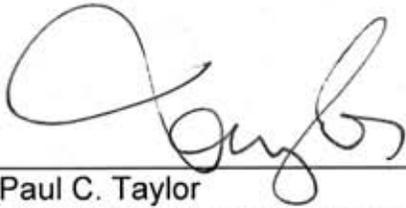
The CHSRA reintroduced the I-5/Grapevine alignment as an alternative to the Palmdale station option. It was expected that this alternative would provide a direct route between Bakersfield and Los Angeles and avoid the issues that CHSRA has been facing between Palmdale and Sylmar. However, there were significant issues along the I-5/Grapevine corridor. LACMTA has officially supported the option of a station in Palmdale.

The I-5/Grapevine Study results were released at the January CHSRA Board meeting at LACMTA. The results of the study confirmed the findings in the program level environmental document approved in 2005. In this meeting the Board approved pursuing the alignment through Palmdale and dropped the I-5/Grapevine route from further consideration. Unfortunately, the work on this study appears to have delayed the environmental work on the Palmdale to Los Angeles segment by seven months.

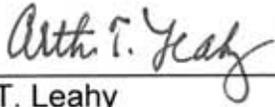
NEXT STEPS

Staff will return to the Board in March 2012 with the Regional Rail update.

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