SUBJECT: REGIONAL RAIL UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and File the Regional Rail Update through January 2013

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. In addition, this unit also manages and coordinates capital improvement projects along the LACMTA owned railroad right-of-way.

BACKGROUND

LACMTA is the largest member agency for the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCARRA), the operator of the Metrolink commuter rail network. Metrolink carries approximately 45,000 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 the second busiest intercity rail corridor in the nation, with combined annual boardings of 7 million per year.

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.

Metrolink Commuter Rail

- Metrolink Ridership and Revenue Update (July thru November 2012)

Metrolink ridership and revenues are positive for FY12-13. Ridership is up 4% year-over-year and is up 3% compared to the FY 2012-13 budget. Revenues are up 9% year-over-year and are at budget for FY 2012-13. This revenue increase is expected, as Metrolink implemented a 7% fare increase for FY 2012-13.
Weekend ridership is up 26% over budget for the year and weekend revenues are 9% over budget for the year. This is largely attributable to the popularity and convenience of the $10 weekend pass.

- **TAP Program Update**

  In June 2013 Metro will begin latching the gates at the subway stations. Metro and Metrolink staff have been working closely to develop a technical solution so that Metrolink riders can smoothly transition thru the gates once latched. A TAP chip will be embedded in the Metrolink fare media and this chip will activate the gate as the passenger swipes their fare media to pass thru the gate. The net impact to the Metrolink rider will be a seamless transfer between the Metrolink and subway systems.

  The new TAP embedded fare media is currently in test mode and a final decision is expected in early March 2013. Once a final decision is made, the Metrolink ticket vending machines will be loaded with the new paper stock and the new TAP embedded fare media will be available for distribution in Spring 2013, prior to the June 2013 latching of the gates. There will be extensive outreach efforts to communicate the process to Metrolink riders. Staff is monitoring developments closely.

**LOSSAN Intercity Rail (Amtrak Pacific Surfliner)**

In January 2013 the Metro Board approved new LOSSAN JPA language. The new language is modeled after State legislation, and empowers LOSSAN to establish a local managing agency which will negotiate with the State to transfer the management of the intercity rail operations to the local managing agency. This transfer will lead to better coordination, integration and efficiencies in intercity, commuter and freight rail operations, scheduling and management of equipment and capital projects in the LOSSAN corridor. Previously, the Metro Board approved the staff recommendation that LACMTA submit an application to become the managing agency for LOSSAN.

The proposed dates for the implementation of the new LOSSAN JPA are as follows:

- Managing agency selection – May 2013
- Managing agency begin management of the transition – July 2013
- Negotiations with the State begin – July 2013
- LOSSAN JPA assumes authority for Pacific Surfliner not later than June 2015
The Pacific Surfliner is Amtrak’s second busiest intercity rail corridor in the nation, averaging 2.6 million boardings per year. Combined ridership in the corridor, including the commuter services, is 7 million boardings per year. Ridership peaks during the summer, weekends and holidays.

Ridership on the Pacific Surfliner is starting to trend back upwards after a recent decline. Including December, ridership has now been up year-over-year, for four consecutive months.
Fare revenues continue to be strong on the Pacific Surfliner. Revenues are up year-over-year in 12 of the last 13 months, including a 16% increase in November 2012. Some of this is attributable to a 2% fare increase in August 2012, and the elimination of some off peak discounts.

On time performance (OTP) for the Pacific Surfliner has been mixed, but is up over 85% consistently since September. Although improved, OTP on the Pacific Surfliner is still significantly lower than the Metrolink commuter services, which average 95% OTP. Some of this is attributable to the longer distances traveled by intercity trains and the opportunity to encounter more delays. Additionally, peak inbound commuter trains receive dispatching priority over intercity trains. Staff continues to work with Amtrak staff to identify the root causes of Pacific Surfliner OTP issues.
Capital Projects

With the approval of the Regional Rail Capital Funding Program, staff has been developing projects within Los Angeles County. In particular, the following projects are underway or in development.

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Of particular importance are the following:

- Raymer to Bernson Double Track - LACMTA received a grant to develop the environmental document and preliminary engineering to provide a second main line track on the Ventura line between Van Nuys and Chatsworth. 30% design to be completed in Spring 2013.
Van Nuys Second Platform - LACMTA received a grant to develop the environmental document and preliminary engineering on a north platform at the Van Nuys station on the Ventura line, also part of the LOSSAN Corridor. 30% design to be completed in Spring 2013.

Regional Rail Engineering and Planning Bench – The Bench selections are complete. The first project is underway in February 2013.

San Bernardino Line Strategic Study – The consultant for this study has been selected as part of the Bench selection. This will be a strategic study of this line with the same format as that study completed for the completed AVL Study. This study will be conducted jointly between LACMTA and SANBAG. The costs for this study will be shared between the two agencies. This study is expected to be underway in February 2013.

Southern California Regional Interconnector Project -- Formally referred to as the LAUS Run-Through Tracks Project, this project will extend at least four tracks through LAUS completing a loop that could circulate trains in either direction. This project will increase the capacity of the station by 40% - 50%. This will have a positive impact on Amtrak and Metrolink trains entering and exiting this terminal. This project is a regional priority that will benefit all of southern California.

With the passage of the high speed rail funding legislation, the need for this project is accelerated. This legislation will provide some of the funding for the construction of this project.

Rancho Vista Grade Separation – The City of Palmdale released a RFP in December for final design. NTD anticipated in March 2013. Previously LACMTA programmed Measure R funds to support final design.

California State Rail Plan

LACMTA staff had the opportunity to review the Administrative Draft of the 2013 California State Rail Plan. This is a comprehensive plan that outlines passenger and freight rail in California. This new plan addresses incorporating high speed rail into the state rail system. With the incorporation of the California High Speed Rail Project Blended System, the plan addresses synergy between the rail systems in the state.

High Speed Rail (HSR)

The signing of legislation related to the funding of the California High Speed Rail Project provides funding for the initial construction of the project as well as the funding of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) and the southern California agencies. LACMTA has several projects on this list that are now eligible for funding. LACMTA is working with the CHSRA and the other southern California agencies to advance funding of the MOU projects.
A working sub-committee has been established that will develop a strategy for funding of the MOU projects in northern and southern California. The challenges associated with obtaining the funding for these projects will be addressed.

Staff is continuing to work with the CHSRA to develop the program as it reaches Los Angeles County. In particular, staff has been working with the CHSRA and other state agencies to determine and mitigate the impacts that the blended service and the Initial Operating Segment have on right-of-way owned by LACMTA. Modeling of the blended service and the impact on the local commuter and intercity railroads has been completed. The results of this modeling will be available in January 2013. It is expected that the modeling will show the need for additional infrastructure to upgrade the regional rail system to support the blended system.

Los Angeles County is the first county that will be affected by the high speed rail project. A significant amount of the LACMTA owned right-of-way on the Antelope Valley Line will be utilized or closely paralleled by high speed rail tracks. Staff is working with the CHSRA to look at funding options to provide infrastructure improvements along this corridor that provide benefit for the existing Metrolink service as well as the longer term benefits for high speed rail. In particular, LACMTA has been looking at opportunities to provide grade separations of the right-of-way and local streets that will bring independent utility by benefitting all trains operating in the corridor as well as the communities.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Continue to develop the Regional Rail Capital Funding Program approved by the Board in July 2012.
- Develop projects for funding under the high speed rail MOU.
- Work with the CHSRA to advance projects in L.A. County that provide independent utility for commuter rail in the short term, while providing long range benefit for the high speed rail system. Also, continue to work with the other state agencies to develop funding strategies for the high speed rail MOU.
- Release the Request for Proposals for the Southern California Regional Interconnector Project, and the Los Angeles County Grade Crossing and Corridor Safety Program.

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