

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Amtrak Pacific Surfliner

MEETING DATE: January 19, 2006

AGENDA ITEM: 12 A

STAFF CONTACT: Andrew Orfila, Michael Powers

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive summary on ridership by station for Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner Service

SUMMARY:

At the October joint meeting between SBCAG and SLOCOG, board members requested information on passenger rail usage. Data was provided to SBCAG by Caltrans and Amtrak staff that summarizes historical ridership patterns for Amtrak's facilities in Santa Barbara County dating back to fiscal year 1999. Amtrak/Caltrans staff also provided ridership data for Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner route for the month of August 2005.

This report can be used to track general Amtrak ridership trends and to develop potential market packages for the Pacific Surfliner and other passenger rail lines. The report also highlights interregional passenger usage of rail between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. In summary:

- The data indicates a general trend of increasing Amtrak ridership in Santa Barbara County.
- The Santa Barbara train station serves the most passengers within the County. There were 270,080 passengers that boarded (passengers on) or alighted (passengers off) at the Santa Barbara train station in fiscal year 2005. This total includes both train and bus ridership numbers. Ridership increases have been steady at the Santa Barbara station over the last seven years, but were down 8% from FY 2004 to 2005.
- The second most popular station in the County is Goleta, with 66,531 passengers that boarded/alighted (trains plus buses) for fiscal year 2005. Ridership has increased significantly at Amtrak's Goleta station, with annual increases of 51% from FY 2003 to 2004 and 46% from FY 2004 to 2005. This can most likely be attributed to increase usage of Amtrak services by UC Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara City College students (many of whom reside in Isla Vista) who travel south to LA and Orange County on the weekends.

- In Lompoc, ridership has decreased since 2003. Ridership at the Surf/Lompoc train station declined by 8% from FY 2002 to 2003 and 44% from FY 2003 to 2004. Similarly, ridership at the Amtrak bus stop at the Visitor's Center declined by 32% from FY 2002 to 2003 and 34% from FY 2003 to 2004. This decrease can most likely be attributed to the recent cancellation of the Buellton-Solvang-Lompoc bus connection.
- There were 1,250 passengers that utilized the Pacific Surfliner train route between stations in Santa Barbara County and stations in San Luis Obispo County during the month of August 2005.
- Approximately 37% of Pacific Surfliner passengers in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties were originating from or destined to stops in Los Angeles County.
- The station experiencing the highest ridership in Santa Barbara County for August 2005 was Santa Barbara (22,508 total passengers). Of this total, 25% were to/from the Los Angeles station, 12% were to/from San Diego, and 6% were to/from Solana Beach. Approximately 4% of this total were passengers to/from the Grover Beach and San Luis Obispo train stations.
- The station experiencing the highest ridership for August 2005 in San Luis Obispo County was the San Luis Obispo station (6,037 passengers). Of this total, 28% were to/from the Los Angeles station, 18% were to/from the San Diego station, and 12% were to/from the Santa Barbara station.

DISCUSSION:

SBCAG was able to obtain the following information from Amtrak and Caltrans staff:

- 1) Annual boardings/alightings for each Amtrak station going back to FY 1999.
- 2) Ridership data for each station along Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner route for the month of August 2005.

Recent Amtrak Ridership in Santa Barbara County

There are five Amtrak train stations in Santa Barbara County: Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Goleta, Surf/Lompoc, and Guadalupe. In addition, passengers can connect to the Santa Barbara station via Amtrak buses at the following locations; Buellton, Solvang, Lompoc (at the Visitor's Center), and Santa Maria. The historical ridership data for Santa Barbara County, submitted by Amtrak/Caltrans staff, is summarized in Table 1. The ridership numbers include both boardings (passengers getting on) and alightings (passengers getting off) for both trains and buses.

Table 1
Annual Amtrak Boardings/Alightings for Each Location in Santa Barbara County
Fiscal Years 1999-2005

City/Station	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	% Change FY 1999-2005
Buellton (a)	n/a	n/a	150	220	344	350	321	+114.0%
Carpinteria	7,455	9,814	10,652	12,539	14,086	17,211	15,880	+113.0%
Goleta	14,590	16,539	19,513	24,452	30,299	45,666	66,531	+356.0%
Guadalupe	6,355	5,548	6,005	5,408	6,537	6,362	6,981	+9.9%
Lompoc (a)	5,538	4,430	3,652	4,418	3,017	1,982	1,582	-71.4%
Lompoc/Surf	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,646	7,034	3,961	5,067	-33.7%
Santa Barbara	222,703	228,800	242,012	244,469	284,976	294,358	270,080	+21.3%
Santa Maria (a)	5,345	5,752	6,582	7,398	7,810	8,408	8,701	+62.8%
Solvang (a)	3,401	3,481	3,789	4,545	4,421	3,071	2,922	-14.1%

(a) Bus boardings/alightings only.

Table 1 shows a general trend of increasing Amtrak ridership in Santa Barbara County. Ridership has increased significantly at Amtrak's Goleta station, with annual increases of 51% from FY 2003 to 2004 and 46% from FY 2004 to 2005. Ridership increases have been steady at the Santa Barbara station, but were down 8% from FY 2004 to 2005.

Pacific Surfliner Ridership

SBCAG obtained data from Amtrak and Caltrans staff that summarized Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner boardings and alightings for each station within Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. The data reflects one month (August of 2005) which is representative of travel during the summer season. The data also reflects new riders associated with the additional second train between Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo that was added in November 2004. The data does not reflect ridership on the interstate Coast Starlight, the train that travels between Los Angeles and Seattle, with stops at Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, among other stations.

The Pacific Surfliner is an intercity rail passenger service operated by Amtrak that runs between San Diego and San Luis Obispo. The route includes five departures and five arrivals daily at the Santa Barbara and Goleta train stations. In addition, the train makes two departures and two arrivals daily to the Surf/Lompoc and Guadalupe stations. There are also connecting buses to and from the Santa Barbara station in Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Lompoc (Visitor's Center), Buellton, and Solvang. In San Luis Obispo County, the Pacific Surfliner makes two departures and two arrivals daily at stations in Grover Beach and the City of San Luis Obispo. There are also connecting buses to and from the Santa Barbara station in Paso Robles, Atascadero, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, the San Luis Obispo train station, and the Grover Beach train station.

Ridership for August 2005 and origin/destination distribution percentages for Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties are summarized in Table 2. The ridership numbers represent passengers traveling in both directions. The 1,250 passengers using the Pacific Surfliner between Santa Barbara County stations and San Luis Obispo County stations represent passengers both boarding from a SLO County station and alighting at a Santa Barbara County station *plus* passengers boarding from a Santa Barbara County station and alighting at a San Luis Obispo station. As shown, approximately 37% of Pacific Surfliner passengers in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties were originating from/destined to stops in Los Angeles County.

Table 2
Pacific Surfliner Ridership and Origin/Destination Data for
Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties

Origin/Destination Stations	Santa Barbara County Stations		San Luis Obispo County Stations	
	Ridership*	% of Total	Ridership*	% of Total
SLO County	1,250	4.1%	67	0.9%
SB County	1,040	3.4%	1,250	16.6%
Ventura County	2,978	9.7%	639	8.5%
L.A. County	11,164	36.4%	2,843	37.7%
Orange County	5,511	18.0%	976	12.9%
San Diego County	8,722	28.4%	1,765	23.4%
TOTAL	30,665		7,540	

* Ridership for August 2005.

The ridership numbers by station are summarized in Tables 3 and 4. The station experiencing the highest ridership in Santa Barbara County for August 2005 was Santa Barbara (22,508 total passengers). Of this total, 25% were to/from the Los Angeles station, 12% were to/from San Diego, and 6% were to/from Solana Beach. The station experiencing the highest ridership for August 2005 in San Luis Obispo County was the San Luis Obispo station (6,037 passengers). Of this total, 28% were to/from the Los Angeles station, 18% were to/from the San Diego station, and 12% were to/from the Santa Barbara station. The attached tables show ridership summaries for each station in Santa Barbara (Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Goleta, Surf/Lompoc, and Guadalupe) and San Luis Obispo (Grover Beach and San Luis Obispo) Counties.

**Table 3
Summary of Ridership by Station for Santa Barbara County
(August 2005)**

Station Origin/ Destination	Guadalupe		Surf/Lompoc		Goleta		Santa Barbara		Carpinteria	
	Ridership	% of Total	Ridership	% of Total	Ridership	% of Total	Ridership	% of Total	Ridership	% of Total
San Luis Obispo	15	1.9%	54	8.7%	111	2.0%	721	3.2%	22	1.1%
Grover Beach	21	2.7%	48	7.7%	28	0.5%	221	1.0%	9	0.4%
Guadalupe			1	0.2%	6	0.1%	90	0.4%	6	0.3%
Surf/Lompoc	1	0.1%			4	0.1%	58	0.3%	0	0.0%
Goleta	6	0.8%	4	0.6%			63	0.3%	102	5.0%
Santa Barbara	90	11.5%	58	9.4%	63	1.1%			710	35.1%
Carpinteria	6	0.8%	0	0.0%	102	1.8%	710	3.2%		
Ventura	14	1.8%	15	2.4%	175	3.1%	562	2.5%	62	3.1%
Oxnard	25	3.2%	2	0.3%	202	3.6%	829	3.7%	26	1.3%
Camarillo	10	1.3%	4	0.6%	16	0.3%	232	1.0%	24	1.2%
Moorpark	7	0.9%	0	0.0%	21	0.4%	170	0.8%	9	0.4%
Simi Valley	6	0.8%	4	0.6%	30	0.5%	413	1.8%	22	1.1%
Chatsworth	11	1.4%	4	0.6%	129	2.3%	1204	5.3%	72	3.6%
Van Nuys	25	3.2%	21	3.4%	116	2.0%	899	4.0%	68	3.4%
Burbank	13	1.7%	12	1.9%	136	2.4%	678	3.0%	166	8.2%
Glendale	31	4.0%	8	1.3%	110	1.9%	695	3.1%	62	3.1%
Los Angeles	148	19.0%	110	17.7%	564	9.9%	5677	25.2%	205	10.1%
Fullerton	49	6.3%	25	4.0%	308	5.4%	1204	5.3%	53	2.6%
Anaheim	39	5.0%	32	5.2%	114	2.0%	895	4.0%	44	2.2%
Santa Ana	26	3.3%	23	3.7%	74	1.3%	584	2.6%	33	1.6%
Irvine	27	3.5%	18	2.9%	257	4.5%	881	3.9%	50	2.5%
San Juan Capistrano	9	1.2%	4	0.6%	0	0.0%	564	2.5%	45	2.2%
San Clemente Pier	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	142	2.5%	8	0.0%	3	0.1%
Oceanside	54	6.9%	49	7.9%	180	3.2%	1112	4.9%	56	2.8%
Solana Beach	12	1.5%	7	1.1%	247	4.4%	1245	5.5%	69	3.4%
Old Town	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	0.2%	34	0.2%	2	0.1%
San Diego	135	17.3%	117	18.9%	2528	44.5%	2759	12.3%	104	5.1%
TOTAL	780		620		5675		22508		2024	

Top 3 station pairs shown in **bold**.

Table 4
Summary of Ridership by Station for San Luis Obispo County

Station Origin/ Destination	San Luis Obispo		Grover Beach	
	Ridership	% of Total	Ridership	% of Total
San Luis Obispo			67	4.3%
Grover Beach	67	1.1%		
Guadalupe	15	0.2%	21	1.3%
Surf/Lompoc	54	0.9%	48	3.1%
Goleta	111	1.8%	28	1.8%
Santa Barbara	721	11.9%	221	14.1%
Carpinteria	22	0.4%	9	0.6%
Ventura	98	1.6%	33	2.1%
Oxnard	216	3.6%	29	1.8%
Camarillo	77	1.3%	28	1.8%
Moorpark	26	0.4%	5	0.3%
Simi Valley	104	1.7%	23	1.5%
Chatsworth	119	2.0%	38	2.4%
Van Nuys	170	2.8%	73	4.6%
Burbank	128	2.1%	41	2.6%
Glendale	230	3.8%	38	2.4%
Los Angeles	1662	27.5%	288	18.3%
Fullerton	228	3.8%	115	7.3%
Anaheim	174	2.9%	56	3.6%
Santa Ana	105	1.7%	39	2.5%
Irvine	107	1.8%	60	3.8%
San Juan Capistrano	104	1.7%	44	2.8%
San Clemente Pier	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Oceanside	250	4.1%	73	4.6%
Solana Beach	178	2.9%	36	2.3%
Old Town	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
San Diego	1071	17.7%	157	10.0%
TOTAL	6037		1570	

Top 3 station pairs shown in **bold**.