

Board Actions: February 2006



MEMBER AGENCIES

California Department of
Transportation

Los Angeles County Metropolitan
Transportation Authority

North San Diego County
Transit Development Board

Orange County
Transportation Authority

San Diego
Association of Governments

San Diego Metropolitan
Transit System

San Luis Obispo
Council of Governments

Santa Barbara County
Association of Governments

Ventura County
Transportation Commission

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

Southern California
Association of Governments

ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Amtrak

Burlington Northern Santa Fe

California Public Utilities Commission

Southern California
Regional Rail Authority

Union Pacific

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JOINT RAIL AGENCY COORDINATION EFFORTS

The Board of Directors discussed meetings with key legislators held in Sacramento on January 26, 2006 by LOSSAN, the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee (SJVRC), and Amtrak. The purpose was to focus attention on passenger rail and the importance of including rail improvements in the current infrastructure bond proposals. A fact sheet was developed for these meetings. Amtrak CEO David Hughes attended, as well as board members from LOSSAN, CCJPA, and SJVRC. A noon-time reception also was very well attended. The Board recommended that these joint visits be a regular occurrence.

STATUS OF STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BONDS AND FUNDING FOR LOSSAN CORRIDOR PROJECTS

Caltrans provided an update on recent activities related to a 2006 infrastructure bond measure, and discussed the inclusion of \$500 million for intercity passenger rail improvements in the Governor's recent bond proposal. The Board discussed efforts by LOSSAN, the CCJPA, and SJVRC to develop an infrastructure bond proposal to focus on these main themes:

- Establish an intercity rail improvement account
- Promote the ability of rail agencies to spend over the short-term
- Allocations should follow a known process (e.g., Proposition 116)
- Capital invested in private rights-of-way should require a public benefit
- Funding for grade separations, sealed corridors, and crossings should be a separate funding source

The Board recommended that this proposal be transmitted to key legislators as soon as possible.

Caltrans also discussed the recent straw proposal announced for the 2006 Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). The \$39 million proposal includes a number of LOSSAN priority projects such as the Los Angeles County triple track and grade separations, Fullerton Station Parking Structure, Solana Beach Parking Structure, replacement rail in Ventura County, and capitalized maintenance.

In response to a concern by SLOCOG that two rail projects included in their regional priorities did not make the ITIP proposal, the LOSSAN Board directed staff to write to the State and request they be added.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND THE LOSSAN CORRIDOR DEFINITION

Amtrak staff discussed the recent proposal by the Bush Administration to provide \$900 million for Amtrak in FY 2007, below the FY 2006 level of \$1.3 billion set by Congress, but above the zero budget proposal of the Administration a year ago. Also disturbing in this \$900 million proposal is zero funds for Amtrak operations. The Board directed staff to contact the federal delegation to urge their support to fully-fund Amtrak and create a stable, multi-year funding program.

Amtrak staff also provided an update on federal legislative efforts. Unfortunately, the House Ways and Means Committee recently stripped the funding proposal from the Rail Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act (RIDE-21) that would have financed rail improvements. There has been no change to S1516, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), sponsored by Senators Lott and Lautenberg and others to provide a federal matching program for rail capital.

Staff provided an update on the LOSSAN corridor definition, an effort to correct the definition in federal legislation from its current identification of *Del Mar to San Diego*, which is a small portion of the 351-mile corridor. Metrolink staff are currently working to identify members on the House side to sponsor this change in the technical corrections bill to the surface transportation bill (SAFETEA-LU). The Board also directed staff to prepare a letter for signature from as many corridor delegates as possible on this issue.

LOSSAN APPROVAL FOR SAN DIEGO RAIL CAPITAL PROJECT PRIORITIES

Late last year, Caltrans requested that NCTD and SANDAG weigh in on prioritizing major capital projects along the rail corridor in San Diego County, in preparation of \$66 million in state funding, a portion of which are reprogrammed funds. Both agencies have provided these priorities to Caltrans and since a portion of available funds is Proposition 116 funds earmarked for LOSSAN in these projects, Caltrans also requested that SANDAG and NCTD seek concurrence from LOSSAN. The Board agreed with these priorities and the reprogramming of Prop 116 funds.

LOSSAN CORRIDORWIDE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN STATUS REPORT

The Board received a status report on the LOSSAN Corridorwide Strategic Business Plan including an assessment of commuter rail between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties and a detailed rail modeling analysis. Modeling analysis will focus on three core alternatives – Amtrak operating this commuter service, Metrolink operating this service, or a more Coaster-like commuter operation. Amtrak provided a forecast of ridership for additional morning and afternoon peak period trips and IBI Group, project consultants, has analyzed the projected ridership for the Metrolink and Coaster-like scenarios. The Board urged staff to devote a large portion of their next meeting to these issues and modeling results and encouraged Board members from the northern agencies to attend. Results and a draft plan are expected by the Board's next meeting in May.

PACIFIC SURFLINER REPORT

Pacific Surfliner trains experienced record ridership in January with a 30 percent increase over January 2005, when winter storms severely impacted service. On-time performance was at 76 percent for December, well below the goal of 85 percent for the corridor. Delays continue to be primarily due to interference with other passenger and freight trains.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The Board of Directors will next meet on Wednesday, May 10, 2006 in San Diego. This meeting will begin at 11:30am.

The next LOSSAN TAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21, 2006 at 11:30 a.m. in Los Angeles.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None received.



UPDATE ON LOSSAN CORRIDORWIDE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN (March 1, 2006)

The LOSSAN Strategic Business Plan has been under development since December 2004 by LOSSAN, Caltrans, and IBI Group. The LOSSAN North Technical Working Group, a subgroup of the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), has been meeting regularly to guide this work. Members are Union Pacific, Caltrans, Amtrak, LOSSAN, Metrolink, SLOCOG, SBCAG, and VCTC Staff.

Following the last round of public meetings in March 2005, an initial draft LOSSAN North Strategic Business Plan was reviewed by the working group. After an extensive round of comments by working group members, the revised draft plan was reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Directors in June. The draft is available on the www.lossan.org Web site, and the official comment period ended September 16, 2005.

The Strategic Plan lays out a program of projects over a twenty-year timeframe for the improvement of the rail corridor between Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. While the study is focused on improving the State-supported intercity rail service (Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner), the benefits of the projects would accrue to all rail services, including commuter rail and freight rail.

Through the earlier public meetings held during development of the draft strategic plan, and following meetings with stakeholders in Santa Barbara County, an objective has been added to the original scope of work to include an evaluation of an inter-county commuter rail service between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, the institutional issues involved in such a service, rail capacity analysis, additional public outreach, and incorporation of these findings into the LOSSAN Corridorwide Strategic Business Plan.

The rail capacity analysis in particular will benefit the entire study, as a number of rail service alternatives including commuter, intercity, and freight operations, will be modeled and evaluated.

Project Schedule

The project schedule is to conclude the study in June 2006. This is a change from the March 2006 completion date reported to the Board of Directors at the September 2005 meeting. The change is largely due to the commuter rail demand and alternatives development tasks taking longer than expected. The rail capacity analysis is now scheduled to begin in March 2006.

Attachment 1 shows the expanded tasks now part of the scope of work, and the schedule for completing this effort.



LOSSAN Corridorwide Strategic Business Plan Schedule for Revised Scope of Work

Task	Schedule
Phase 1: Public Outreach/Education	
Coordination with Technical Working Group/Agencies	Ongoing
Study Context	January 2005
LOSSAN North Strategic Plan Presentation	
Stakeholder meetings	
Public Information/Education meetings	March 2005
Community Evaluation	
Evaluation Criteria	
Phase 2: Plan Development	
Draft LOSSAN North Strategic Plan	June 2005
Circulate Draft Plan	
Phase 3: Santa Barbara – Ventura Commuter Rail Study	
Institutional Issues	Ongoing
Identify Commuter Rail Demand	December 2005
Develop Three Operational Analyses	December 2005 – January 2006
Phase 4: Rail Capacity Analysis and Costs	
Rail Capacity Analysis	March 2006
Identify Needed Rail Improvements and Costs	March 2006
Phase 5: LOSSAN Corridorwide Strategic Business Plan	
Revised LOSSAN North Plan	April 2006
Public Review and Comment	May 2006
Corridorwide Summary Document	June 2006