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## STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Intercity Rail Status Report

**MEETING DATE:** June 4, 2008

**AGENDA ITEM:** 5

**RECOMMENDATION:**

View intercity rail video and receive summary of LOSSAN activities

**STAFF CONTACT:** Michael Powers

**DISCUSSION:**

Overview of LOSSAN

The Los Angeles–San Diego–San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) is composed of counties along the Pacific Surfliner rail corridor, which extends from San Diego to San Luis Obispo. LOSSAN advocates for improvements in the San Luis Obispo – San Diego coastal rail corridor. Current voting membership includes appointed and elected representation from Caltrans, Amtrak, and Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and San Diego Counties. SBCAG became a member of LOSSAN in 2001. (See attached brochure for more information).

SBCAG is represented on the LOSSAN policy committee by Supervisor Salud Carbajal and the alternate is Mayor Marty Blum. LOSSAN Policy Board meetings are scheduled on a quarterly basis, on the second Wednesday of the month at alternating locations around the corridor.

The following summarizes the recent topical issues addressed by LOSSAN

Coordination with other State supported Intercity Rail Corridors

In addition to LOSSAN, there are two other intercity rail corridors, the San Joaquin, which serves the area between Sacramento and Bakersfield with connections to San Jose, and the

Member Agencies

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

Capitol, which serves San Jose north to Oakland and north east to Sacramento and up to Colfax. The Policy Boards Chairs have met with each other to develop a joint strategy to address funding challenges. One of the strategies is to increase the awareness of importance of the state supported intercity rail service program. Staff will show a short video at the meeting that was recently produced with the assistance of the Capitol Corridor and BART.

#### Orange County Improvement Study

(Note: Orange County is paying renewed attention to rail services following the collapse of their Centerline Light Rail Project a few years ago). The existing Improvement Study tries to identify "Quick Hits" to improve the type of service, service reliability, and the flow of information to the consumer. For the most part these improvements have to do with signage and information on train status. However, a few measures refer to adding stops and adjusting the Pacific Surfliner service. The LOSSAN TAC submitted lots of comments on the draft study. Likewise, the LOSSAN board members expressed concerns about the impact of these measures on corridorwide performance. There was an extensive discussion of this issue. In addition there was the overall question of service delivery by different rail operators such as Metrolink, Coaster, and the Pacific Surfliners operated by Amtrak. How can better service integration be achieved by improving the transparency of the service since the consumer doesn't care if it is a Metrolink or Amtrak train they just want to get from point A to B?. The OC staff agreed to involve the LOSSAN TAC and Board as the second part of the Comprehensive Rail Study progresses which will model express and skip stop rail type of services. These new plans may impact our service to some degree so staff will monitor future developments via. the LOSSAN TAC.

#### On Time Performance Report

At its September 13, 2006, meeting, the Board of Directors established an ad hoc committee of the Board which worked with the TAC to learn more about the current state of on-time performance in the corridor and develop possible strategies for improvements. This Committee met eight times and has reviewed recent trends in on-time performance (OTP), reasons for declining OTP, and possible strategies for improvements.

The Committee developed two goals for its work:

1. Identify strategies that will directly improve OTP of trains, including capital and operational improvements.
2. Identify strategies to improve the rail experience for passengers including better and timelier passenger information

The following measures are included in the study to address the major issues impacting on-time performance.

##### *Issue: Lack of Capacity*

Short-Term Strategies:

- Implement planning studies that identify chokepoints along the corridor and planned improvements. (completed and underway) to improve on time performance

The LOSSAN North (2007) and LOSSAN South Strategic Business Plans (2004), as well as the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the LOSSAN South corridor (2007), have identified the corridor chokepoints.

OCTA and Caltrans are leading efforts to: (1) develop a set of short-term improvements that can be implemented at minimal cost such as better customer information at stations and potential

service changes, and (2) conduct a comprehensive strategic assessment to better integrate services in the corridor. Both studies will have an impact on the corridor's on-time performance.

- Implement Key Capacity Projects and Advocate for Funding (underway)

LOSSAN member agencies have recently completed capacity projects along the corridor such as double-tracking in Orange County and Camp Pendleton, and other projects such as the Oceanside Double-Track Project which are now under construction. LOSSAN has worked to ensure that Proposition 1B funds specifically earmarked for the IntercityRail Program have been allocated. Specifically, the FY 07/08 state budget contains bond funds for corridor projects including \$150 million for new rolling stock, pending completion of an intercity rail program audit by the state Department of Finance. In March 2008, the Federal Railroad Administration announced guidelines for the first federal rail capital matching program. Congress set aside \$30 million nationwide to begin this program. Caltrans will submit candidates' projects.

- Continue to work jointly with the Capitol Corridor, San Joaquin's, and Coast Rail Coordinating Council to preserve and increase rail funding (underway)

The state's intercity rail agencies are monitoring efforts at the state level that could further impact the Public Transportation Account and are developing ways to ensure that intercity rail funds are maintained. With a project \$14 billion state deficit, cuts first enacted to the PTA account in FY 2008 could continue in FY 2009.

*Issue: Priority of Host Railroads*

Short-Term Strategies:

- Continue to work with the host railroads to make improvements to the corridor (underway)
- Support the Coast Daylight service (underway)

Long-Term Strategies:

- Reconsider incentive payments to BNSF and UP

*Issue: Passenger Information*

Short-Term Strategies:

- Review the results of recent OTP focus groups and decide on further research (underway)
- Implement Amtrak electronic message signs at Surfliner stations (underway)
- Build upon lessons learned from the Capitol Corridor's experience and successes as well as other rail agencies that have implemented similar projects.
- Coordinate with Metrolink's Passenger Information Delivery System. Ensure adequate monitoring and maintenance of the system. Request periodic status reports.
- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of these near-term strategies.

Mid-Term Strategies:

- Design and implement additional signage at stations to inform riders where to go/who to call for additional information.
- Identify necessary steps to provide text messages to riders, consult with COASTER, Metrolink, and BART staff on similar efforts.

State Budget

As indicated in the prior item, State Department of Finance has not released the funds to purchase new intercity passenger rail cars. LOSSAN is sending a letter to legislators requesting

there assistance in ensuring these funds be released ASAP as there no rail car capacity in CA. and if some cars are lost due to accidents there could impacts to existing rail services. This lack of rail car capacity also effects the ability to expand rail service.

#### Federal LOSSAN Definition

The SAFETEALU technical corrections bill has passed both houses. Language in this bill extends the LOSSAN corridor definition north to SLO whereas now it is south of Los Angeles. Whereas the President has indicated he will not sign it, he will not veto it so it became law on May 14. This correction will make the entire corridor potentially eligible for any new federal project rail funds under the auspices of LOSSAN.

#### High Speed Rail Bond Measure

In addition to the work done by LOSSAN, staff is also monitoring progress on AB 3034, the High Speed Passenger Train Bond Act. The measure provides for \$9.95 Billion primarily for the construction of a portion of the High Speed Rail between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and it is currently scheduled for placement on the state's November 2008 general election ballot. Of the total bond funds, \$950 million will be available for capital projects on other passenger rail lines (includes existing light rail, cable car, commuter rail, and heavy rail) to provide connectivity to the High Speed Train system and for capacity enhancements and safety improvements to those lines. Twenty percent or \$190 million is allocated to Caltrans for state supported intercity rail lines, of which \$47 million shall be allocated to each of the three intercity rail corridors. The \$47 million allocated for the San Diego to San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) rail corridor will only pay for a limited scope of improvements, e.g. 5 to 10 new sidings. The bond funds are limited to capital improvements. The bill does not provide funding for new services (other than the High Speed Rail) so any new commuter rail service developed between Ventura and Santa Barbara would not be eligible for funding. However, capacity projects funded from the bonds (eg., new sidings) if approved by voters will likely benefit both Pacific Surfliner service and future commuter rail service.

**COMMITTEE REVIEW:** None

**ATTACHMENT:** What is LOSSAN?

# Los Angeles - San Diego - San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency



The LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency works to increase ridership, revenue, capacity, reliability, and safety on the coastal rail line from San Diego to Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo.

The LOSSAN rail corridor is one of the busiest intercity passenger rail corridors in the nation, second only to the Northeast corridor.

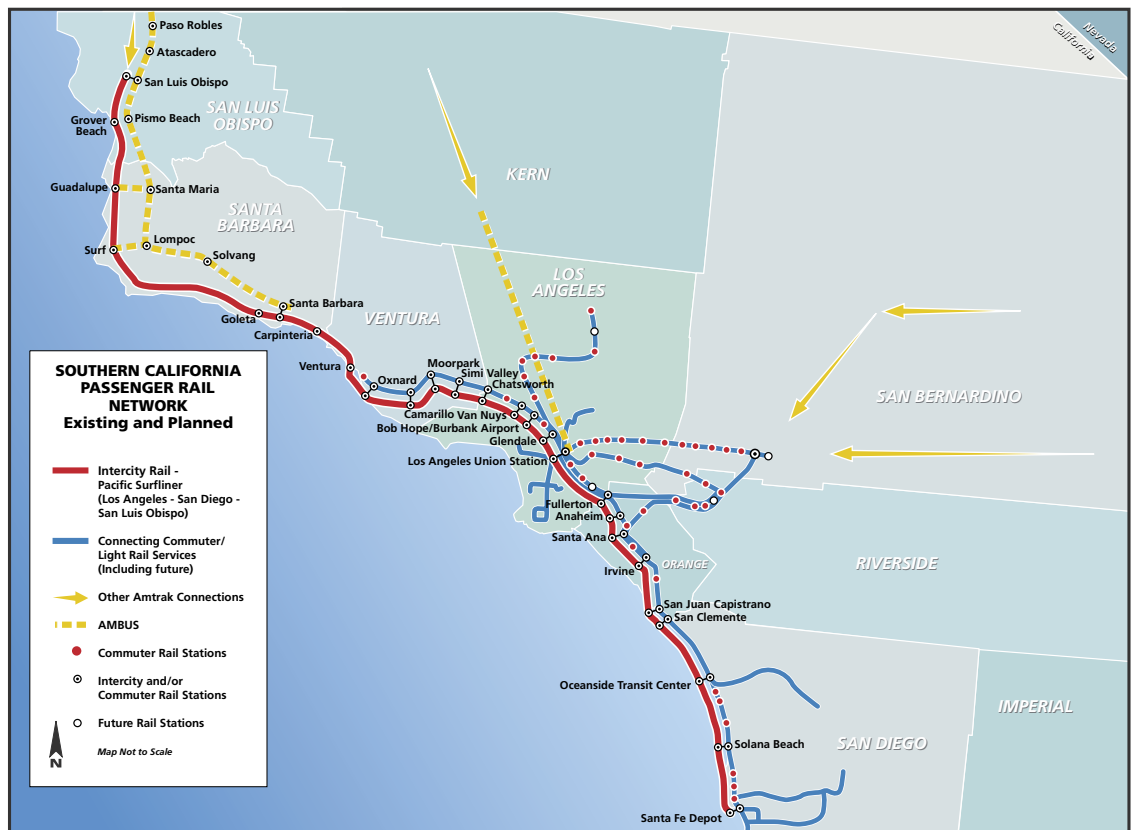
*“...one of the busiest  
intercity passenger rail  
corridors in the nation...”*

Intercity travelers, commuters, and freight trains make this corridor a critical component of the region’s transportation system. The parallel freeway corridor, Interstate 5 and Highway 101, is heavily congested during peak commute periods, weekends, and holidays.

Also known as Amtrak’s *Pacific Surfliner* Corridor, this 351-mile rail line serves Southern California’s key coastal population centers and two of the state’s most congested regions, Los Angeles and San Diego.

Each year, the LOSSAN corridor carries more than 2 million intercity passengers and 4.5 million passengers on the commuter rail systems: Metrolink and Coaster. One in every nine Amtrak riders use our corridor.

(over)



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### ***Funding Priorities***

The member agencies of the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency, working together, have been successful in securing funding for intercity rail programs. The State of California has invested more than \$1 billion in the corridor, along with \$200 million by Amtrak, and \$300 million by local agencies.

With the help of Congress through the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program, LOSSAN received \$24 million for four critical improvement projects on the railroad corridor: grade separations in the Cities of Fullerton, Commerce, and Solana Beach and the stabilization of the Del Mar Bluffs.

There are many more critical projects throughout the LOSSAN corridor needing funding. These include centralized traffic control systems, double and triple tracking, siding extensions, station parking structures, real-time passenger information systems, bridge replacements, and grade crossing safety improvements.

There are nearly \$4.2 billion in *Pacific Surfliner* projects identified in the California Passenger Rail System 20-year Improvement Plan, sponsored by Amtrak.

### ***Legislative Priorities***

The LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency supports state and federal legislative efforts to advance intercity passenger rail services in the corridor. Specifically, the LOSSAN strategy is:

**Funding:** Preserve, protect and enhance the use of funding for intercity rail capital and operating purposes.

- Existing Funds: Protect existing funding programs from diversion for specific projects or programs off-the-top or to balance the State's general fund budget.
- New Funds: Support efforts to increase funding for transportation purposes including bond measures.
- TEA-21 Reauthorization: Ensure that a LOSSAN earmark is included in the federal reauthorization legislation of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the corridor is properly and accurately defined.
- Support a dedicated, stable multi-year state and federal funding program that provides for the continued development and maintenance of the national intercity passenger rail system (i.e., Amtrak).

**Service Levels:** Maintain and expand the frequency and quality of intercity passenger rail services, including efforts to develop a high-speed passenger rail system that includes the LOSSAN Corridor.

**Rail Safety and Security:** Support efforts to increase safety and security along the LOSSAN corridor, including grade separation projects.

**Community Development:** Help provide local jurisdictions with the necessary resources for smart growth, affordable housing, and other initiatives as they relate to rail development.

### ***History***

The LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency is a joint powers agency that was formed in 1989 to coordinate intercity rail service between Los Angeles and San Diego. In 2001, the agency expanded to include rail agencies and operators north of Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo. With this change, all rail agencies along the entire *Pacific Surfliner* corridor are represented on LOSSAN.

#### ***LOSSAN 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 AGENCY***

Southern California Association of Governments

#### ***ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY MEMBER AGENCIES***

Amtrak • Burling

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