




January 29, 2018

To: Members of the Board of Directors

From: Jennifer L. Bergener, Managing Director 

Subject: Pacific Surfliner Peak Period Service to Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties

Overview

The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency has worked with the California State Transportation Agency in coordination with the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments to evaluate alternatives and develop an operating plan to provide peak-period service between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara County. An implementation plan has been developed and is presented for Board of Directors' consideration.

Recommendations

- A. Direct staff to continue efforts to implement peak-period service between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara County.
- B. Direct staff to initiate negotiations with the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments for cost sharing and marketing related to the peak-period service between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara County.

Background

Improving peak hour passenger rail service between Los Angeles and Ventura–Santa Barbara counties has been identified as a priority in several Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency (Agency) planning documents, including the Strategic Implementation Plan and all LOSSAN Agency annual business plans. Over 15,000 people commute daily between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. Over the last two years, the LOSSAN Agency has worked with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and in coordination with the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) to evaluate alternatives for providing peak-period service between Los Angeles County and Ventura – Santa Barbara counties. These efforts have included an evaluation of the current infrastructure, securing additional operating slots and the retiming of existing trains.

Peak-period service is strongly supported within Santa Barbara County. The SBCAG 101 In Motion Plan also supports the implementation of peak-period service between Los Angeles and Ventura – Santa Barbara counties. The local sales tax measure, Measure A, includes funding to support this effort.

Discussion

The LOSSAN Agency has worked with CalSTA to evaluate alternatives for providing the peak-period service between Los Angeles and Ventura – Santa Barbara counties. In evaluating these options three key considerations were included: protect the core Pacific Surfliner service, minimize impacts to existing Metrolink service, and implement the service in April 2018. In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to retime (reschedule) existing Pacific Surfliner trains in a manner that provides peak-period service between Los Angeles and Ventura – Santa Barbara counties.

There are currently three key activities underway to implement this service:

- Schedule approval by the host railroads, including retimed trains
- Development of operating costs and revenue estimates, along with the corresponding cost share for SBCAG
- Pursuit of additional passenger rail cars to facilitate the increased train trips

Staff, working in close coordination with Amtrak and the host railroads, have developed a retimed schedule that provides for arrival into Santa Barbara at approximately 7:30 a.m., with an approximate 4:40 p.m. departure. This schedule has been submitted to the host railroads for official review and approval.

Amtrak is underway with the development of the operating cost estimates to provide the retimed service. The California Department of Transportation, through consultant resources, had previously developed ridership and revenue projections to support the retimed schedule. These projections are currently under review. Staff is working with SBCAG and CalSTA to determine an approach for cost sharing and marketing the retimed service.

Staff continues to pursue options for additional equipment, including current discussions with the Great Lakes Central Railroad. While additional equipment is not required to implement the retimed schedule, it will be required for any further service expansions and will serve to provide better efficiencies in the operation of the daily Pacific Surfliner service following the implementation of the retimed schedule.

Next Steps

Staff will finalize initiation negotiations with SBCAG for cost sharing, continue to seek approval of the retimed schedule from the host railroads and return to the Board of Directors with the full operating plan in February 2018.

Summary

Staff has developed an implementation plan to provide peak-period service between Los Angeles and Ventura – Santa Barbara counties. This plan is presented for Board of Directors' consideration.

Attachment

None.