




February 21, 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. Staff has developed a draft schedule to implement peak period service between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara County as part of the regular April schedule change. Board of Directors approval is requested for the draft April 1, 2018 Pacific Surfliner schedule and authorization for the Managing Director to negotiate and execute an agreement not to exceed \$2,500,000 with the Santa Barbara Association of Governments for cost sharing on the peak-period service.

Recommendations

- A. Approve the April 1, 2018 Pacific Surfliner Retimed Schedule to facilitate peak-period service between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara County.
- B. Authorize the Managing Director to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Santa Barbara Association of Governments in an amount not to exceed \$2,500,000 to for cost sharing of 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, as well as the California State Rail Plan. There are currently over 15,000 people that 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 and Ventura – Santa Barbara counties. These efforts have included an evaluation of the current infrastructure and various operating scenarios, including securing additional operating slots and retiming 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, and on February 14, 2018, the SBCAG South Coast Subregional Planning Committee recommended that the SBCAG Board of Directors (Board) approve the use of up to \$2.5 million in Measure A funds for a two-year pilot period to fund SBCAG's share of the additional operating costs necessary to provide the peak-period service on the Pacific Surfliner.

Discussion

The LOSSAN Agency has worked with CalSTA and Amtrak 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 all of 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.

LOSSAN Agency staff, working in close coordination with Amtrak and the host railroads, has developed a retimed Pacific Surfliner schedule that provides for peak-period service into Santa Barbara County:

- Northbound: Train 761 departs Los Angeles at 4:09 a.m. and arrives in Santa Barbara at 6:47 a.m. / Goleta at 7:16 a.m.
- Southbound: Train 792 departs Goleta at 4:25 p.m. / Santa Barbara at 4:40 p.m. and arrives in Los Angeles at 7:47 p.m.

A detailed schedule is provided as Attachment A. All necessary host railroad approvals have been secured to implement this schedule.

The retiming required modifications to existing Pacific Surfliner train schedules, including a bifurcation of existing Train 761 on weekdays and other minor modifications to improve reliability and on-time performance. A comparative

schedule is provided as Attachment B. As reflected in Attachment B, corridorwide connectivity remains intact. This effort also sets the stage for further development and implementation of a 13th round trip which would operate between San Diego – Los Angeles – San Luis Obispo.

Amtrak has developed an operating cost estimate consistent with the retimed schedule. The California Department of Transportation, through consultant resources, had previously developed ridership and revenue projections to support the retiming effort. These projections have been updated consistent with the final schedule, and reflect a modest decrease in both ridership and fare revenue at the onset when compared with the existing schedule. However, this new service is expected to grow over time, recovering that modest decrease and providing an overall increase in both ridership and revenue. Additionally, LOSSAN Agency staff is working with SBCAG on the development and implementation of a robust marketing effort to be funded by SBCAG, supported and facilitated by the LOSSAN Agency, which is expected to raise awareness of the new service and promote ridership. The retimed service will also be further supported by the existing Pacific Surfliner Transit Transfer Program as well as additional programs being developed and implemented by SBCAG to provide vital first- and last-mile connections.

The projected increase in operations cost to provide the retimed service is \$2.3 million annually, driven primarily by labor costs associated with operating Train 759, as well as costs related to stations and commissary to provide the necessary support for the train. In order to support this increase in operating cost, staff has worked with SBCAG and CalSTA to gain consensus on a 50/50 cost sharing for the necessary increase in operating subsidy. The SBCAG Board is anticipated to take action to approve the necessary funding mid-March 2018. To facilitate this cost sharing, an agreement with SBCAG must be negotiated and executed to define the roles and responsibilities as well as the specific cost and budget. LOSSAN Agency staff is working with CalSTA to secure the necessary approvals for funding and will return to the LOSSAN Board in March with any necessary budget amendments.

While additional equipment is not immediately required to provide the retimed service, LOSSAN Agency staff continues to pursue options for additional equipment, including current discussions with the Great Lakes Central Railroad and Amtrak. Additional equipment 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.

Summary

The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency staff has developed an operating schedule and cost sharing plan to provide peak-period service between Los Angeles and Ventura – Santa Barbara counties through the retiming of existing Pacific Surfliner trains. The retimed schedule to provide peak-period service as well as a proposed cost sharing plan are presented for Board of Directors review and approval.

Attachments

- A. Pacific Surfliner – Retimed Schedule to be Effective April 1, 2018
- B. Pacific Surfliner – Comparative Schedule for October 2017 and April 2018