



On-Board WiFi Update

LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee
November 7, 2019

Background

- On-board WiFi was installed on the Pacific Surfliner in 2011 by Amtrak as part of a national initiative
- Since 2011, Amtrak has provided WiFi program management and support services, and contracted with Nomad Digital to provide on-board WiFi solutions
- WiFi funded through on-board passenger technology line item, approx. \$346,753/year
- WiFi landing page funded through separate agreement with Volanno, approx. \$10,500/year
- Amtrak no longer plans to provide WiFi service for state-supported trains in California after Sept. 30, 2020



Current WiFi Challenges

- Relies on commercial cell signals and is often slow, unreliable
- Does not support streaming or large file downloads
- Some Superliner cars are not WiFi equipped, resulting in inconsistent service
- Amtrak's most recent electronic customer satisfaction index shows top drivers of dissatisfaction are all unital issues related to the reliability of on-board Wi-Fi, with ability to stay connected being number one
- Current system is now at end-of-life, in need of replacement/upgrade



WiFi Service Alternatives

- In 2018, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) assumed management of WiFi service from Amtrak; now contracts directly with Nomad Digital to provide WiFi solution, and Xentrans, Inc. to manage program
 - Utilizes the California Department of Transportation contracts for reduced cellular data rates
 - Option for Pacific Surfliner to follow similar model
- Opportunity to provide more proactive management of WiFi service
 - Improved performance monitoring
 - Better reporting, analytics
 - Faster troubleshooting



Next-Generation WiFi

- CCJPA led procurement to upgrade WiFi service on Capitol Corridor and San Joaquins routes in partnership with six local transit agencies
 - Includes replacement of on-board equipment, new back office, and ongoing operations and maintenance
 - Will enhance WiFi speed, reliability and accommodate future on-board entertainment platforms
- Contract awarded to Nomad Digital in June 2019
- Upgrade project expected to be complete in late 2020 for equipment operating on the Capitol Corridor and San Joaquins routes

Other Alternatives

- Partner with COASTER and Metrolink to offer a consistent WiFi solution for Southern California passenger rail services
- Explore feasibility of wayside WiFi equipment to avoid relying on cellular signals



Next Steps

- Evaluate options for managing and providing on-board WiFi service post September 2020, when Amtrak support will end, and return to the Board of Directors with a recommendation in Spring 2020
- Monitor performance of Capitol Corridor and San Joaquins WiFi upgrade project
- Continue to coordinate with COASTER and Metrolink on future opportunities to provide joint on-board WiFi service