

**March 5, 2026**

**To:** Members of the Technical Advisory Committee

**From:** Jason Jewell, Managing Director

**Subject:** Fiscal Year 2025-26 Second Quarter Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Trends

### **Overview**

A report on ridership, revenue, and on-time performance for passenger rail services on the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor, including the Pacific Surfliner, Metrolink, and COASTER, covering the second quarter of state fiscal year 2025-26.

### **Recommendation**

Receive and file as an information item.

### **Background**

The 351-mile Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor (Corridor) travels through a six-county coastal region in Southern California and is the busiest state-supported intercity passenger rail corridor in the United States. The LOSSAN rail corridor includes 41 stations and currently hosts 145 daily passenger trains. The Pacific Surfliner currently serves 29 stations and operates 24 daily one-way trains (twelve round trips). The eleventh-round trip between Los Angeles and San Diego was added in the end of March 2025 and the twelfth-round trip was added in mid-June 2025. In fiscal year (FY) 2025 there were nearly 2.1 million passenger trips on Pacific Surfliner trips alone, and an additional 3.1 million passenger trips were taken on the two commuter rail services (Metrolink and COASTER) on the LOSSAN Corridor.

### **Discussion**

The report provides an update on the performance trends of the passenger rail services operating on the LOSSAN Corridor, focusing on three specific performance areas: usage (ridership and passenger miles), efficiency (revenue and farebox recovery), and quality (on-time performance (OTP) and customer satisfaction). The report includes the Pacific Surfliner intercity passenger rail service, as

well as commuter rail service on Metrolink’s Ventura County Line (VCL) and Orange County Line (OCL), and the North County Transit District’s (NCTD) COASTER system. Amtrak national data is included for comparative purposes. The reporting period is the second quarter of FY 2025-26, covering the months of October, November, and December 2025.

Usage

For the second quarter of FY 2025-26, total LOSSAN corridor **ridership for the three services combined was 1,342,316**, representing a 4.7 percent increase when compared to the same period of the previous year. A 24-month chart for the LOSSAN corridor, with the specific performance of each service, is shown in Figure 1.

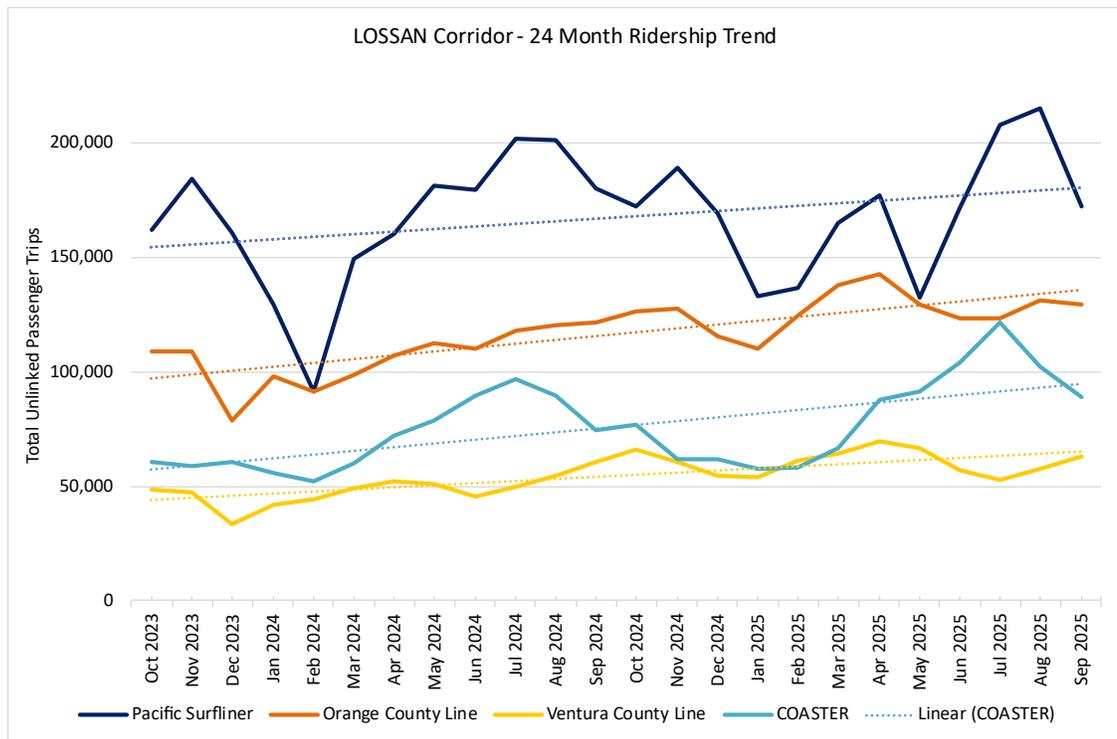


Figure 1

The 24 months of ridership data included in Figure 1 provide a more accurate indicator of the overall change in ridership along the corridor. Due to seasonal variances, a complete ridership trend is difficult to discern from a single 12-month period. Including 24 months of data accounts for seasonal variations in ridership patterns and provides sufficient information to develop a linear trendline for each service. A summary table of the ridership, revenue, and OTP for the LOSSAN corridor can be found in Attachment A. In addition to this overall corridor data, details on the performance of each service are provided below.

Pacific Surfliner

Overall LOSSAN corridor ridership includes ridership on the Pacific Surfliner intercity passenger rail service, which operates between San Diego and San Luis Obispo. Pacific Surfliner ridership during the second quarter of FY 2025-26 was 576,773, representing an increase of 8.6 percent when compared to the same period last year, as is illustrated in Figure 2.

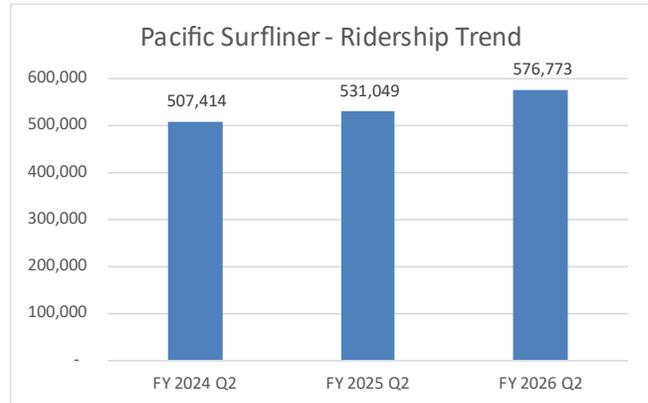


Figure 2

**Metrolink**

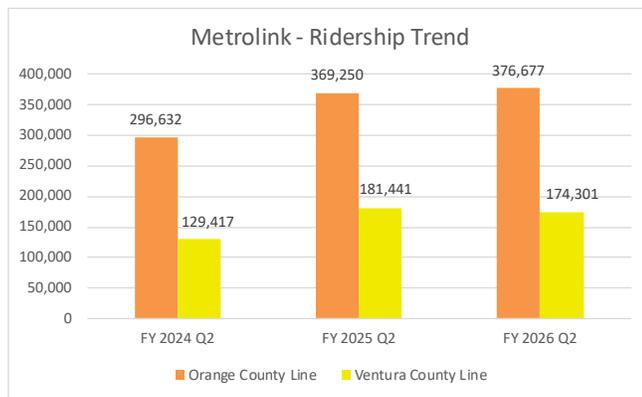


Figure 3

The Ventura County Line (VCL), which operates between East Ventura and Los Angeles, saw a ridership decrease of 3.9 percent when compared to the second quarter of last year. The Orange County Line (OCL), which operates between Los Angeles and Oceanside, seen a 2 percent increase in ridership over the same report period in the prior year. During the second quarter of

FY 2025-26, there were an average of 14,282 Metrolink pass holders per month who utilized the Rail 2 Rail (R2R) Program to ride Pacific Surfliner trains<sup>1</sup>.

**COASTER**

<sup>1</sup> Metrolink R2R values are based on preliminary, unaudited data provided by Amtrak.

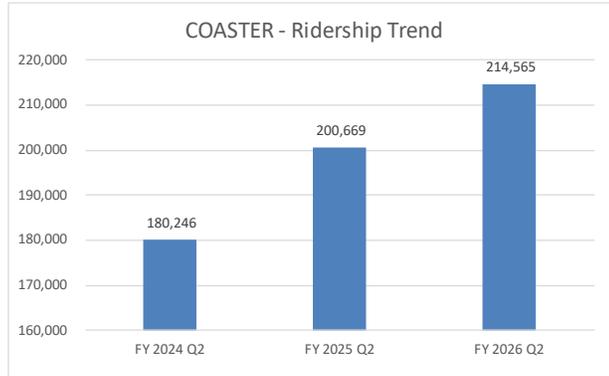


Figure 4

NCTD’s COASTER commuter rail service operating between Oceanside and San Diego experienced a 6.9 percent increase in ridership during the second quarter of FY 2025-26 when compared to the same period in the prior year, as shown in Figure 4. During the second quarter of FY 2025-26, there were an average of 475 COASTER pass holders per month utilizing the R2R Program to ride Pacific Surfliner trains<sup>2</sup>.

### Amtrak System

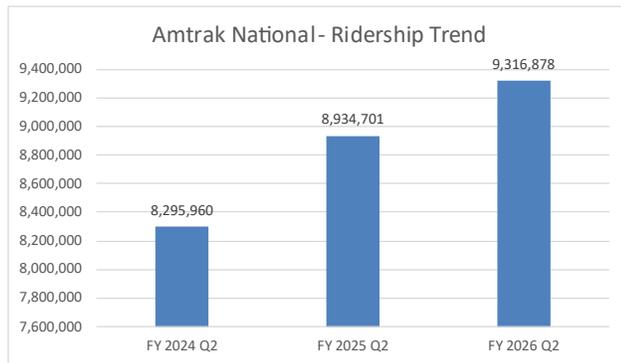


Figure 5

Amtrak service nationwide experienced a cumulative ridership increase of 4.3 percent for the second quarter of FY 2025-26 when compared to the same period in the prior year, as illustrated in Figure 5.

Amtrak’s Coast Starlight, which operates between Seattle and Los Angeles, saw ridership increase by 7.7 percent in the second quarter compared with the same period last year. The Capitol Corridor (operating between Auburn, Sacramento, Oakland, and San Jose) and the San Joaquins Corridor (operating from both Oakland and Sacramento to Stockton and Bakersfield) are the two other California state-supported intercity passenger rail services operated by Amtrak and provide a comparison to the Pacific Surfliner service despite serving significantly different markets. Ridership increased by 15.3 percent on the Capitol Corridor and increased by 0.2 percent on the San Joaquins Corridor during the second quarter when compared to the same period last year.

### Passenger Miles

<sup>2</sup> COASTER R2R values are based on preliminary, unaudited data provided by Amtrak.

A passenger mile is defined as one passenger traveling one mile. For example, 10 passengers who each travel 100 miles would generate 1,000 passenger miles. This metric depicts the growth in passenger usage and distance traveled.

The Pacific Surfliner generated over 61.8 million passenger miles during the second quarter of FY 2025-26, which is a 16.7 percent increase compared to the same period in the prior year. Factoring in the average pounds of carbon dioxide emissions generated per passenger mile traveling in a private automobile versus on passenger rail, a reduction of about 22,244 tons of greenhouse gases was achieved, which is equivalent to avoiding burning approximately 2,502,982 gallons of gasoline.

Efficiency

Passenger Trips Per Train Mile

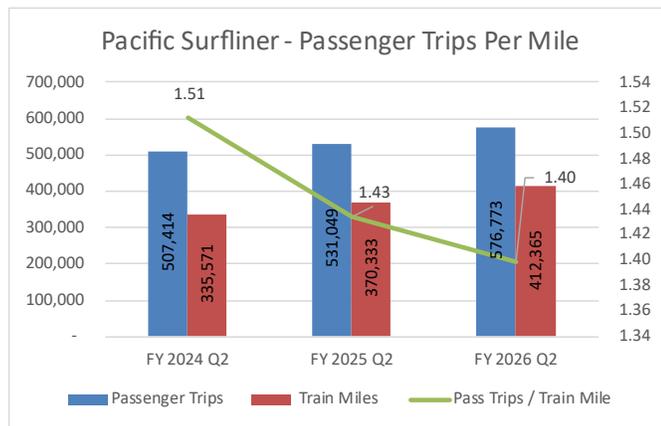


Figure 6

Passenger trips per train mile are calculated by dividing total passenger trips (ridership) by the total miles traveled by all Pacific Surfliner trains operated in revenue service<sup>3</sup>.

This metric focuses on service efficiency, as it is the ratio of usage (passenger trips) over service provided (train miles). The higher the ratio value, the

more efficient the service, and vice versa. For the second quarter of FY 2025-26, the ratio of passenger trips per train mile decreased by 2.5 percent when compared with the same period in the prior year, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Revenue

<sup>3</sup> Total train miles include deadhead mileage to and from rail yard facilities.

In line with the increase in Pacific Surfliner ridership, driven primarily by growing demand and increased operation, total revenue also increased. For the second quarter of FY 2025-26, total revenue increased by 9.5 percent when compared with the same period in the prior year, as shown in Figure 7.

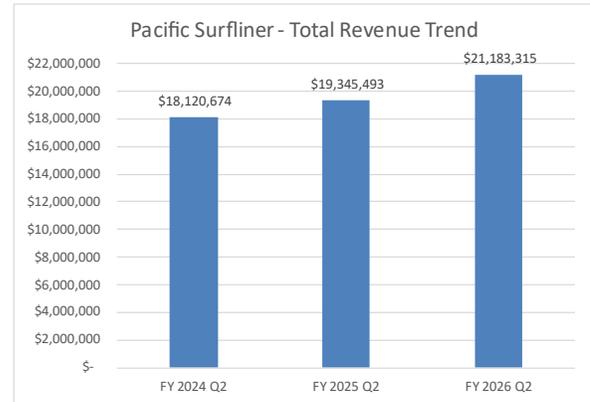


Figure 7

### Farebox Recovery

The Pacific Surfliner farebox recovery ratio is calculated as total revenue divided by total operating expenses as defined in the Intercity Passenger Rail Act of 2012 Establishment of Uniform Performance Standards by the California State Transportation Agency. As a performance measure, farebox recovery is normally reported on an annual basis, versus a shorter period. This is because expenses are not linear throughout the year, which can result in significant fluctuations in the farebox recovery ratio from month to month and even quarter to quarter. The Pacific Surfliner is legislatively required to achieve a minimum annual farebox recovery of 55 percent. The Pacific Surfliner farebox recovery ratio for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2025, was 61 percent.

### Quality

#### OTP

The methodologies for calculating OTP vary significantly between intercity and commuter rail services. A commuter train is considered late if it arrives six or more minutes late to its terminal location, while a Pacific Surfliner train is considered late if it arrives more than 15 minutes after its scheduled arrival time. For the Pacific Surfliner service, endpoint OTP is calculated by dividing the total number of trains arriving on time at the end point by the total number of trains operated. The State of California intercity passenger rail Uniform Performance Standards (UPS), which were approved by the Secretary of Transportation in 2014, set an endpoint OTP goal of 90 percent for the Pacific Surfliner service.

For the three months in the second quarter of FY 2025-26, endpoint OTP for the Pacific Surfliner averaged 82.3 percent, which was a 13.1 percent increase over the same period in the prior year. Figure 8 illustrates a monthly OTP trend for the Pacific Surfliner.

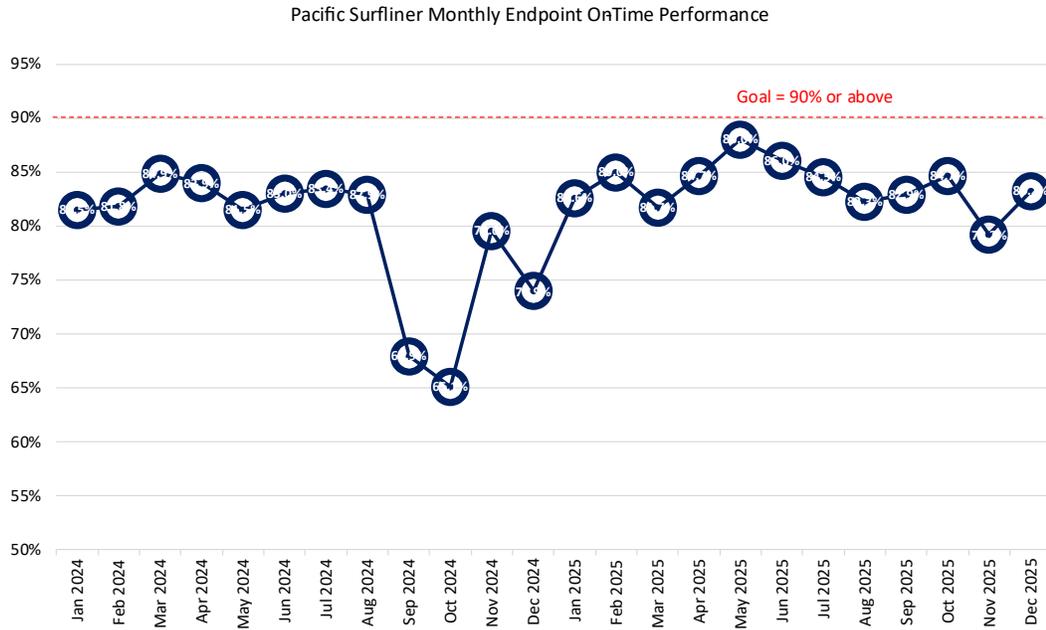


Figure 8

### Customer Satisfaction

Amtrak reports a monthly Electronic Customer Satisfaction Index (eCSI) score for all routes, in which a “very satisfied” percentage is calculated per 100 passengers via electronic surveys. For the second quarter of FY 2025-26, the Pacific Surfliner scored an average eCSI of 84 percent, representing a two percent increase from the average eCSI of 82.4 percent achieved during the same period last year.

### Additional Performance Indicators

#### Food and Beverage Sales

The LOSSAN Agency’s focus on improving service quality and the customer experience has prompted additional attention to the food and beverage selections offered in the Pacific Surfliner Café Car. Continual effort is made to ensure that menu items meet passenger expectations. As part of that effort, LOSSAN Agency staff closely monitor food and

Sales Category	FY 2025 Q2 (Oct-Dec 2024)	FY 2026 Q2 (Oct-Dec 2025)	% Change
Baked Goods	\$ 70,061	\$ 69,546	-0.7%
Beer	\$ 195,853	\$ 259,539	32.5%
Beverages	\$ 246,564	\$ 283,958	15.2%
Dairy Products	\$ 1,471	\$ 2,653	80.4%
Fresh Prepared Foods	\$ 191,908	\$ 190,410	-0.8%
Liquor	\$ 111,453	\$ 111,047	-0.4%
Miscellaneous Merchandise	\$ -	\$ -	
Packaged Snack Foods	\$ 362,603	\$ 479,452	32.2%
Wine	\$ 233,802	\$ 257,969	10.3%
Desserts	\$ -	\$ 3,891	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,413,714</b>	<b>\$ 1,654,574</b>	<b>17.0%</b>

Figure 9

beverage sales to gauge the success of what is being offered and identify items that need to be adjusted. For the second quarter of FY 2025-26, food and beverage sales increased by 17 percent compared to the same quarter in the prior year.

### Amtrak Thruway Bus Service

Pacific Surfliner rail service is supplemented by Amtrak's network of Thruway buses that connect passengers throughout the LOSSAN corridor. The bus routes function as part of the Pacific Surfliner service and as of December 31, 2025, included:

- Route 17: Three daily round trips between Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Oakland (where it connects with Capitol Corridor); and one daily round trip between San Luis Obispo and Oakland.
- Route 39: One daily round trip between Fullerton and Indio/Coachella Valley, and one daily round trip between Fullerton and Palm Springs.

For the second quarter of FY 2025-26, combined ridership on these two routes totaled 30,674, representing an increase of 16.5 percent when compared to the ridership of 26,332 for the same period in the prior year. This increase can be attributed to a temporary expansion of service to route 17 between San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara during a brief closure period for construction of the Honda Bridge Replacement.

### ***Summary***

This report provides an update of trends for the usage, efficiency, and quality of the passenger rail services on the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor, including the Pacific Surfliner, Metrolink, and COASTER, for the second quarter of FY 2025-26. During the second quarter, total combined passenger rail ridership along the corridor increased by 4.7 percent when compared to the same period last year. Notably, ridership on the Pacific Surfliner alone increase by 8.6 percent, accompanied by a 9.5 percent increase in total revenue relative to the same period in the previous year.

### ***Attachment***

- A. Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Performance Summary, Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2025-26

### **Approved by:**

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