



# Board Actions: September 2004

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San Luis Obispo County  
ASSOCIATION OF  
GOVERNMENTS

Los Angeles - San Diego - San Luis Obispo  
Rail Corridor Agency

## 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

- Southern California Association of Governments

## ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Amtrak
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe
- California Public Utilities Commission
- Southern California Regional Rail Authority
- Union Pacific

## STAFFED BY:

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## DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (PEIR/EIS) FOR THE LOS ANGELES TO SAN DIEGO CORRIDOR

The Board of Directors approved comments by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (PEIR/EIS) for conventional rail improvements to the Los Angeles to San Diego segment of the LOSSAN corridor. Directors urged Caltrans and the Federal Railroad Administration, the state and federal lead agencies for the document respectively, to select the Rail Improvements Alternative as the preferred alternative.

Directors concurred with the TAC on reserving action on selecting either the Low Build or High Build Scenario of the Rail Improvements Alternative pending more project-specific analysis in certain areas. However, the Board did reaffirm LOSSAN support for improvements that enhance intercity service, provide optimum speed and travel time that can be delivered most effectively, and completed by working with the communities along the corridor.

## STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING ISSUES RELATED TO THE LOSSAN CORRIDOR

The Board heard an update from Caltrans regarding the status of the state's fiscal situation and its potential impact on the corridor. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) recently approved the FY 2005 intercity rail operating budget at the level requested by Caltrans. A contract has been signed with Amtrak at FY 2004 levels and includes the additional trip between Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo. No additional capital projects are currently receiving funds and the state is awaiting November election results on two statewide ballot initiatives related to Indian gaming that would impact transportation funds.

An update on the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill, TEA-21, was provided. Another continuing resolution is expected to be approved beyond the current extension of September 30, 2004, and no new action will be taken before the November elections. The Board restated the need to continue to focus efforts to correctly define the LOSSAN corridor in the reauthorization legislation and requested contacting the Secretary of Business, Transportation, and Housing for a letter of support for our efforts.

## **LOSSAN CORRIDOR-WIDE STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Board of Directors received an update from staff regarding the status of the corridorwide strategic plan, which would update the vision for the 351-mile corridor, determine project criteria, and develop priorities. Funds are available from Caltrans and SANDAG will manage the contract. A technical working group of TAC members will be formed and will report to the Board on its progress at the next meeting.

## **AMTRAK FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

Amtrak staff provided a detailed report on the recently released update to the Five-Year Strategic Plan. Central to this plan is a State Corridor Initiative in which the three state-supported corridors in California, including the Pacific Surfliner, have been rated at the highest level of readiness for funds. The full plan is available at [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com). Directors discussed the need for consensus within the state and formal support for the proposal from California.

## **ADDITIONAL INTERCITY SERVICE TO SAN LUIS OBISPO**

Since 1995, there has been one round-trip between San Diego and San Luis Obispo. Amtrak and Caltrans announced that the additional round-trip between Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo is tentatively scheduled for a mid-November 2004 kickoff. This intercity service will take a Metrolink time slot in the schedule and will be available to Metrolink passengers. The equipment is refurbished single-level cars. Train crews have been hired and are currently training. Caltrans, SLOCOG, and SBCAG will begin work on interagency agreements to allow rail passengers to board local transit systems free of charge, similar to agreements along the Capital Rail Corridor.

## **PACIFIC SURFLINER REPORT**

Pacific Surfliner trains continue to experience record ridership and are on track to easily pass last year's record annual ridership of 2.1 million.

The Rail2Rail program between Amtrak, Metrolink, and Caltrans continues to account for nearly 50 percent of the increase in intercity ridership. In August 2004, the North San Diego Transit Development Board (NCTD) Directors approved an extension of a similar program between Amtrak, Coaster, and Caltrans through June 2005. The latest monthly figures show that more than 6,500 Coaster riders used Amtrak trips during the period.

Caltrans and Amtrak also recently proposed to OCTA and MTA that two Pacific Surfliner trains begin stopping at Laguna Niguel and Norwalk commuter rail stations. This is in response to a request by OCTA and MTA that Surfliner trains begin serving all commuter rail stations between Laguna Niguel and Los Angeles Union Station. Amtrak and Caltrans reviewed schedule, capacity, and other considerations in making this proposal.

## **NEXT MEETINGS**

The LOSSAN TAC will next meet on Tuesday, October 12, 2004, at MTA at 11:30 a.m.

The LOSSAN Board of Directors will next meet on Wednesday, November 17, 2004 at 12:00 p.m. at MTA.