

# Central Coast Network Integration Study

San Luis Obispo--Moorpark

Prepared for:  
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments

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FEHR  PEERS

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# Executive Summary

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) has undertaken this study to evaluate the existing network of long-distance, publicly-operated intercity passenger services and consider opportunities for improved integration between connecting or overlapping service providers. The Network Integration Study is part of a statewide effort led and funded by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Numerous other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and major regional transit agencies statewide are conducting similar studies concurrently, with each lead agency defining its own regionally specific goals and objectives within the broader purpose.

## Project Goals and Purpose

The study area for the SBCAG Network Integration Study follows the coastal rail corridor from the City of Moorpark in Ventura County to the City of San Luis Obispo in San Luis Obispo County, and the major population and job centers between those communities, particularly the Cities of Ventura and Oxnard, and the cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta in Santa Barbara County. Currently the Coast Starlight, Pacific Surfliner, and Metrolink (south of Ventura) provide rail passenger service within the study area. A variety of public intercity bus operators and agencies provide transit service between many of the communities in the study area, although with the exception of the Amtrak Thruway Bus that fills schedule gaps for Surfliner trains, none have routes that operate through a majority of the region. Local bus operators can provide first/last mile connections and regional operators have the potential ability to fill gaps in the passenger rail network, although currently the extent to which either of these services are provided is limited or coincidental.

The California State Rail Plan (CSRP) outlines a vision for rail and bus travel within and through the Central Coast and the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) North corridor regions.<sup>1</sup> This study focuses on short and mid-term improvements (2022-2027) while ensuring consistency with the CSRP's long-term vision for 2040. **Short and mid-term goals identified in CSRP include** increasing ridership on existing service by better integrating transit schedules and connectivity, improving transit reliability, increasing frequency between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara to bi-hourly service, and integration with regional rail services with at least hourly service at most stations by 2022. **By 2027 in the mid-term**, the plan calls for 4-hour rail service between Goleta and San Luis Obispo and for identifying opportunities to increase intercity transit frequency. **The long-term vision (2040)** service goals put forward in the State Rail Plan are:

1. Hourly integrated rail and bus service, with at least bi-hourly rail service between San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara
2. Hourly rail service between Goleta and Los Angeles

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<sup>1</sup> Caltrans, 2018 *California State Rail Plan: Connecting California*.

### 3. Half-hourly express rail service between Oxnard and Los Angeles

This study focuses on intra-regional travel between major cities in the study area, with the rail corridor and US-101 as the backbone. The goal of this study is to recommend opportunities that meet the 2027 service goals in the State Rail Plan through efficient use of existing resources and scheduling, and adding new service, or expanding existing service with a combination of rail and additional intercity bus routes or trips on existing lines. The study identifies regional transit gaps along the corridor where schedule coordination and consolidated transit hubs would facilitate better regional connections. The study will examine the high-level scheduling, operational, capital, and governmental opportunities as well as some of the challenges of enhancing regional service and connectivity through coordination of rail and bus services.

It is important to note that the existing transit service described in this report is based on pre-COVID-19 conditions. Most transit agencies have experienced a loss in ridership, and as a result have reduced service levels, including Pacific Surfliner bus and rail service in this corridor. Agencies in the study area, as well as state and regional government, may be restructuring service to ramp up to pre-COVID levels or take this time as an opportunity to restructure service completely. The situation and forecast for how the pandemic will affect travel patterns, transit services, funding availability, and more is unknown.

## Summary of Existing Services

There are a number of transit agencies, routes and services operating across the three-county study area, including three distinct passenger rail lines, several express/commuter intercity buses, over a dozen local public transit operators, and several private reservation-based intercity bus carriers. This study focuses primarily on the Pacific Surfliner, Amtrak Thruway Bus, and publicly operated intercity buses that cover parallel segments of US-101 between cities in the study area as the “backbone” services.

- **Pacific Surfliner intercity rail service** administered by LOSSAN, a joint-powers authority of transit agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations between San Diego and San Luis Obispo. The Pacific Surfliner operates five daily round trips between Los Angeles and Goleta, two of which continue north to San Luis Obispo; and three other trips continue via Thruway bus. The Pacific Surfliner is funded solely by the State of California.
- **Amtrak Thruway intercity bus service** complements Pacific Surfliner trains by extending rail trips along a parallel highway corridor or providing other intercity connections to rail trains. Until recently, California law required that Thruway tickets be sold in conjunction with at least one leg of a rail trip. Following the passage of Senate Bill 742 (SB742) in 2019, Thruway services can now be sold independently of Surfliner service. Within the study area, Thruway buses extend Surfliner trips north of Goleta to and from San Luis Obispo.
- **Coastal Express** is an intercity bus service operating between Ventura County and South Santa Barbara County. Service to Santa Barbara operates bidirectionally throughout the day, while Goleta routes are peak-period/peak-direction only. The Ventura County Transportation

Commission (VCTC) administers the service through a private contractor using Ventura County administered state and federal transit funds, and Measure A funds provided by SBCAG.

- **Clean Air Express** is an intercity commuter bus service operating from North Santa Barbara County to employment centers in Goleta and Santa Barbara. Clean Air Express operates five trips from Santa Maria, seven from Lompoc, and one from Solvang and Buellton. All trips are peak-period/peak-direction only with all buses laying over in Goleta or Santa Barbara during the day. SBCAG administers and contracts the service using Measure A and state transit funds provided by Santa Barbara County.
- **SLORTA Route 10** is an express bus service operating between San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria with limited stops along US-101 in Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande, and Nipomo. The service operates clockface hourly round trips throughout the day with two additional “express” trips, which omit some stops along the route. The San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA) administers and operates the service.

Each of these transit offerings serve specific, established transit markets. The Pacific Surfliner is the second largest intercity passenger rail service in the country. Each of the three intercity bus routes has a strong ridership base and the potential to expand service.

## Challenges to Integrating Existing Services

In terms of integrating these services to provide a better network of long-distance transit options through the entire region, there are a number of challenges to address. Between Goleta and Santa Maria, the travel demand and intercity transit availability decreases substantially. There is a strong travel market however, between Santa Maria and San Luis Obispo. As a result of this uneven level of supply and demand through the middle of the study area, there is a substantial gap in connectivity between Goleta and Santa Maria that poses a challenge for effective integration of passenger services. There are also routing and operational complications that need to be addressed in order to facilitate connections between each of these services.

- **The Pacific Surfliner and all other bus services (including Thruway) do not always share stops in the namesake cities.** In some cases, Pacific Surfliner stations are located several miles from an urban center, with limited or no local transit connections. Adding to the complication, several Thruway trips are routed through communities along US-101 that are not served by rail at all. Furthermore, presumably to reduce overall travel time, some Thruway bus stops in major cities, such as Santa Maria, are not co-located with other local transit centers to minimize routing time off the highway, reducing utility for passengers.
- **Pacific Surfliner service is limited to only five daily round trips, with only two trips providing single-seat train service to/from San Luis Obispo.** The other three daily trips operate between Goleta and San Luis Obispo as bus trips, but as noted above, the Thruway bus does not serve the same route or even key destinations.

- **Clean Air Express and SLORTA Route 10 have no overlap in Santa Maria in either route or schedule time.** In the limited span in which both services operate, Clean Air Express or Route 10 would need to extend the route several miles to make a connection.
- **Service between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara/Goleta is extremely limited.** Clean Air Express operates five weekday trips from Santa Maria, all departing before 7:00AM. Return trips are in the afternoon, departing Goleta beginning at 3:30PM and arriving in Santa Maria between 5:30PM and 7:00PM.
- **Clean Air Express and Coastal Express make only limited connections in downtown Santa Barbara.** Although both services share many stops in Goleta and Santa Barbara, because Clean Air Express focuses primarily on the commuter market, there is only a narrow window on weekdays when connections are feasible.
- **Coastal Express service terminates in Camarillo.** Opportunities to integrate rail or transit service to Moorpark are limited.

## Opportunities to Integrate Existing Services

Despite the challenges outlined above, there are also several opportunities presented, if funding and interagency agreements can be developed:

- **Clean Air Express buses could be operated during the day when the vehicles are otherwise idle in Goleta/Santa Barbara.** This equipment could operate extended run-through service to Ventura or new round-trip service to Santa Maria, bridging the mid-day service gap. As identified in the 2019 Clean Air Express Short-Range Transit Plan, Measure A does not provide enough funding to maintain current Clean Air Express service levels through 2040, so any expanded service must be supported with external funding.
- **Some VCTC buses could shift from deadhead to revenue service,** presenting similar opportunities to fill service gaps with run-through or round-trip extensions.
- **SBCAG's Lane and a Train strategy includes a high priority goal of implementing commuter rail service between Ventura County and Santa Barbara/Goleta.** Infill stations can take advantage of new high-density residential growth in Ventura as well as improved job access in Santa Barbara and Goleta within the existing rail corridor. Rail capital and operating funding should be good candidates under the State's focus on GHG/VMT reduction, equitable transit services, and alternative modes of transportation.
- **SLORTA Route 10 could connect to Clean Air Express trips with limited repurposing of deadhead to become revenue express trips** in the early morning and late evening. The existing Route 10 service design provides reliable hourly clockface scheduling which supports the objectives of the State Rail Plan for service in this corridor.
- **The corridor length and characteristics are conducive to battery electric bus and train operation.** As more agencies are working to comply with the State Innovative Clean Transit Rule, the availability of bus charging stations at the endpoints of the corridor, and potentially at key locations in between, will increase. Modifying existing services and adding new trips operated

with zero emission vehicles supports the State's goals for greenhouse gas reductions and would prove to be an attractive alternative for passengers.

## Recommendations

Based on a high-level review of transit services as they were operating prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing regional rail planning led by LOSSAN for increased Surfliner service, the SBCAG Intercity Network Integration Study developed the following recommendations. The final chapter of this study expands on each of these points.

- Consider developing agreements between SBCAG, VCTC and SLORTA to create more seamless fare transfer options for through-travelers connecting between Coastal Express, Clean Air Express, and SLORTA Route 10 to encourage long-distance trips when connections are possible.
- Consider working with SLORTA and VCTC to assess the feasibility of adjusting select trips to improve transfer opportunities between regional services.
- Work with SLORTA, VCTC, community partners and economic/tourism organizations to co-advertise and cross-brand new and extended services to attract riders.
- Evaluate the feasibility of creating additional trips to fill in the Central Segment midday service gap by utilizing vehicles that lay over during the day in Santa Barbara or Ventura.
- Work with key stakeholders to develop an implementation plan for expanded interregional bus service between Camarillo and San Luis Obispo to fill in service gaps and achieve a two-hour headway goal throughout the day.
- Continue to evaluate the feasibility of implementing commuter rail service to expand connectivity between Goleta and Camarillo, which partly achieves the State Rail Plan goal of more frequent rail service.

# Existing Intercity Transit Service

## Introduction

This section summarizes the rail and bus transit service providers operating within the study area, including operational characteristics such as their respective governing bodies, route alignment and frequencies, and applicable fare structures. Understanding the operational characteristics of the existing transit environment will assist in identifying opportunities to enhance connectivity in the future.

This Network Integration Study examines the passenger rail services between Moorpark in Ventura County and the City of San Luis Obispo, long-distance intercity bus services operating on the parallel US-101 highway, and the major population centers along those two transportation corridors. Currently, the Amtrak Coast Starlight, the state-funded Pacific Surfliner, and Metrolink commuter rail (south of Ventura) provide rail service with options to travel to Los Angeles, San Diego, and throughout the West Coast. Some interregional/intercity bus services operate along US-101, including private operators such as Greyhound, and the Amtrak Thruway Bus routes that are intended to extend or backfill train trips primarily for the Surfliner. At least a dozen local transit agencies provide local and subregional service (in the context of this three-county study area), and also provide first/last mile connections to the intercity rail network.

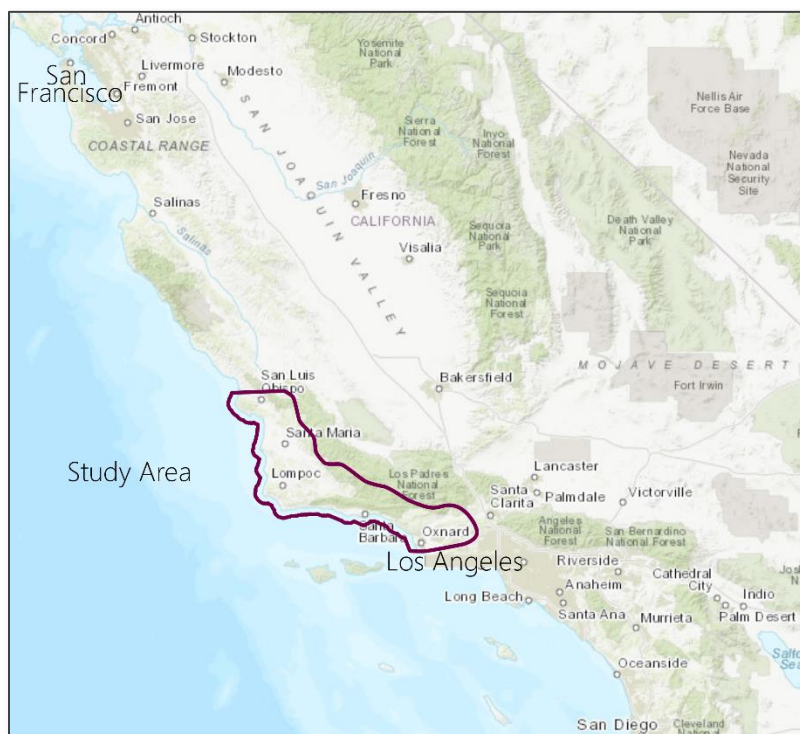


Figure 1 SBCAG Network Integration Study Area

Figure 1 shows the study area and its location on the Central and Southern California coast. Study segments are described in detail in the following sections. Figure 2 shows the detailed study area and major communities in the three-county region.

The existing conditions analysis evaluates regional transit services that provide connections through the study area along three main segments:

- A** - San Luis Obispo to Santa Maria
- B** - Santa Maria to Santa Barbara
- C** - Santa Barbara to Moorpark

Figure 2 Study Area detail along US-101 and parallel rail corridor



The rail corridor extending between Moorpark and San Luis Obispo includes the following stations:

- Moorpark
- Camarillo
- Oxnard
- East Ventura (Metrolink only)
- Ventura
- Carpinteria
- Santa Barbara
- Goleta
- Surf (west of Lompoc)
- Guadalupe
- Grover Beach
- San Luis Obispo

US-101 also connects many of these cities, although it follows a more inland route between Goleta and Grover Beach, connecting to the cities of Buellton and Santa Maria which are not directly on the rail corridor. Lompoc is an outlier as a population center that is neither directly on the rail corridor or US-101.

## Regional and Intercity Transit Operators in the Study Area

Long distance bus transit routes meet regional travel needs such as providing express service for commuters (such as the Clean Air Express and Coastal Express) administered by a regional governing or policy-making entity such as the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), and the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA). As this report will demonstrate, the intercity bus transit operators presently serve specific commuting markets between neighboring economic centers, for example, between the greater Ventura area and the Santa Barbara-Goleta employment area, and longer-distance or non-commuter intercity service is very limited, particularly north of Goleta.

While some of the long-distance lines that have developed over the years serve the same stops at their terminus as another service, they largely do not coordinate schedules to provide continuing service along the larger coastal corridor. Therefore, one-seat rides for long distance trips are limited to certain Amtrak, Surfliner, or Thruway routes, or through private intercity carriers.

Table 1 outlines the regional transit agencies, their type of governance, and their relevant services operating in the study area.

Table 1 Regional Rail and Bus Routes Connecting Communities in the Study Area

| Type        | Transit Service (Branding)                 | Governing Body  | Relevant routes/lines                                  | Service Type(s)                      | Relation to Network Integration Study          |
|-------------|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Rail</b> | Metrolink                                  | Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA)     | Ventura County Line                                    | Commuter Rail                        | South study area intercity connection          |
|             | Pacific Surfliner                          | LOSSAN (Nine members)                                   |  | Intercity Rail                       | Backbone rail service                          |
|             | Amtrak                                     | National Passenger Railroad Corporation (Amtrak)        | Coast Starlight  | Long-Distance National Rail          | Backbone rail service                          |
| <b>Bus</b>  | Amtrak Thruway Bus                         | LOSSAN  | 4, 10, 17, 18, 21                                      | Continuing Regional Rail Connections | Backbone bus service                           |
|             | San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority | JPA in San Luis Obispo City/County                      | 10   | Intercity Bus (Route 10)             | Backbone bus service                           |
|             | Breeze                                     | Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT)                         | Breeze 100, 200  | Sub-regional Express Bus             | Intraregional connections between rail and bus |
|             | Guadalupe Flyer                            | City of Guadalupe                                       | Guadalupe Flyer  | Local Bus                            | Intraregional connections between rail and bus |
|             | Wine Country Express                       | City of Lompoc Transit (COLT)                           | Wine Country Express                                   | Sub-regional Express Bus             | Intraregional connections between rail and bus |
|             | Clean Air Express                          | Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) | North Santa Barbara County to Goleta/Santa Barbara     | Commuter Express Bus                 | Backbone bus service                           |
|             | Coastal Express                            | Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC)         | Coastal Express, Hwy 101/Conejo, Cross County Limited, | Intercity Express Bus                | Backbone bus service                           |
|             | Santa Barbara Airbus                       | Private operator  | Goleta to LAX  | Intercity Airport Bus                | Private operator in study corridor             |
|             | Flix Bus                                   | Private operator  | San Francisco to Los Angeles                           | Intercity Express Bus                | Private operator in study corridor             |
|             | Greyhound                                  | Private operator  | San Francisco to Los Angeles                           | Intercity Express Bus                | Private operator in study corridor             |

## Defining Regional and Intercity Transit Service for Network Integration

This study focuses on transit services connecting multiple urbanized areas within the study area along US-101 or along the single rail corridor (which largely parallels US-101). The purpose is to examine how the parallel passenger rail and intercity bus services could be coordinated to create additional opportunities for long-distance trips. Rail services include the state funded Pacific Surfliner and long-distance Amtrak Coast Starlight, and Metrolink commuter rail (south of Ventura). Metrolink provides commuter rail between Los Angeles Union Station and the city of Ventura, although service between Ventura and Moorpark is substantially less frequent. The Amtrak Coast Starlight and Pacific Surfliner share stops at Oxnard, Santa Barbara, Goleta, and San Luis Obispo, but the Pacific Surfliner also serves the Santa Maria area at Guadalupe, the Lompoc coast area, the City of Ventura, and Moorpark.

Including local and intercity public transit, there are more than a dozen bus routes in the study area operated by a number of different agencies. This study defines “backbone” intercity bus services as those that primarily operate on the US-101 corridor connecting at least two distinct urban centers between San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Moorpark (Figure 2). These services are the focus of this network integration study, as they already provide express-style intercity bus service that is roughly parallel to the rail corridor and the Surfliner service. These intercity bus services connect major communities with a travel time that is comparable to driving, and, in most cases, offer a route that either directly connects with (or is reasonably close to) another agency-route continuing through the next portion of the study area and/or has a connection to the intercity rail corridor for continuing service.

Some agencies, such as San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA), provide both local and regional bus services; for the purposes of this study only the regional services are discussed. There are also examples, such as the Clean Air Express (administered by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments [SBCAG]), which operate exclusively express, regional commuter service.

In addition, there are private bus operators that provide long-distance intercity service through the study area, including Santa Barbara Airbus, Flix, and Greyhound. While these services are also important options for travelers, coordinating private operators with public rail and bus routes are not a primary objective of this study.

At least a dozen local bus services (for example, routes operated by Santa Barbara MTD or Gold Coast Transit) play an important role in transportation throughout the three counties in the study area and several operate routes connecting to rail stations and intercity bus stops. Given the focus on long-distance connections between major rail-served communities, this network integration study does not provide a detailed evaluation of local bus services, although some local operators (SMAT, MTD) provide express service on US-101 in portions of the study area.

Chapter 3, *Challenges in Coordinated Intercity Bus and Rail Services*, explores in detail the rationale for focusing this study on a limited series of bus routes in addition to the rail services.

## Summary of Study Area Intercity Routes

This section summarizes which services connect through the study area and between key urban centers within the study area. Figure 3 displays the existing regional transit service included in this study serving the major urban centers of San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria, Goleta/Santa Barbara, and Ventura/Oxnard. The diagram shows the study area divided into three segments:

- Northern Segment: San Luis Obispo to Santa Maria, connected by SLORTA Route 10
- Central Segment: Santa Maria to Goleta/Santa Barbara, connected by Clean Air Express
- Southern Segment: Santa Barbara to Ventura and Moorpark, connected by VCTC Coastal Express

All three segments are connected by the Pacific Surfliner and Coast Starlight trains, although in total this is only three trains per day through all three segments.

Figure 3 also shows a number of other services which are described in Table 1 as either Local or Sub-regional Express Bus. These routes serve smaller travel markets, typically connecting smaller communities adjacent to one of the urban centers.

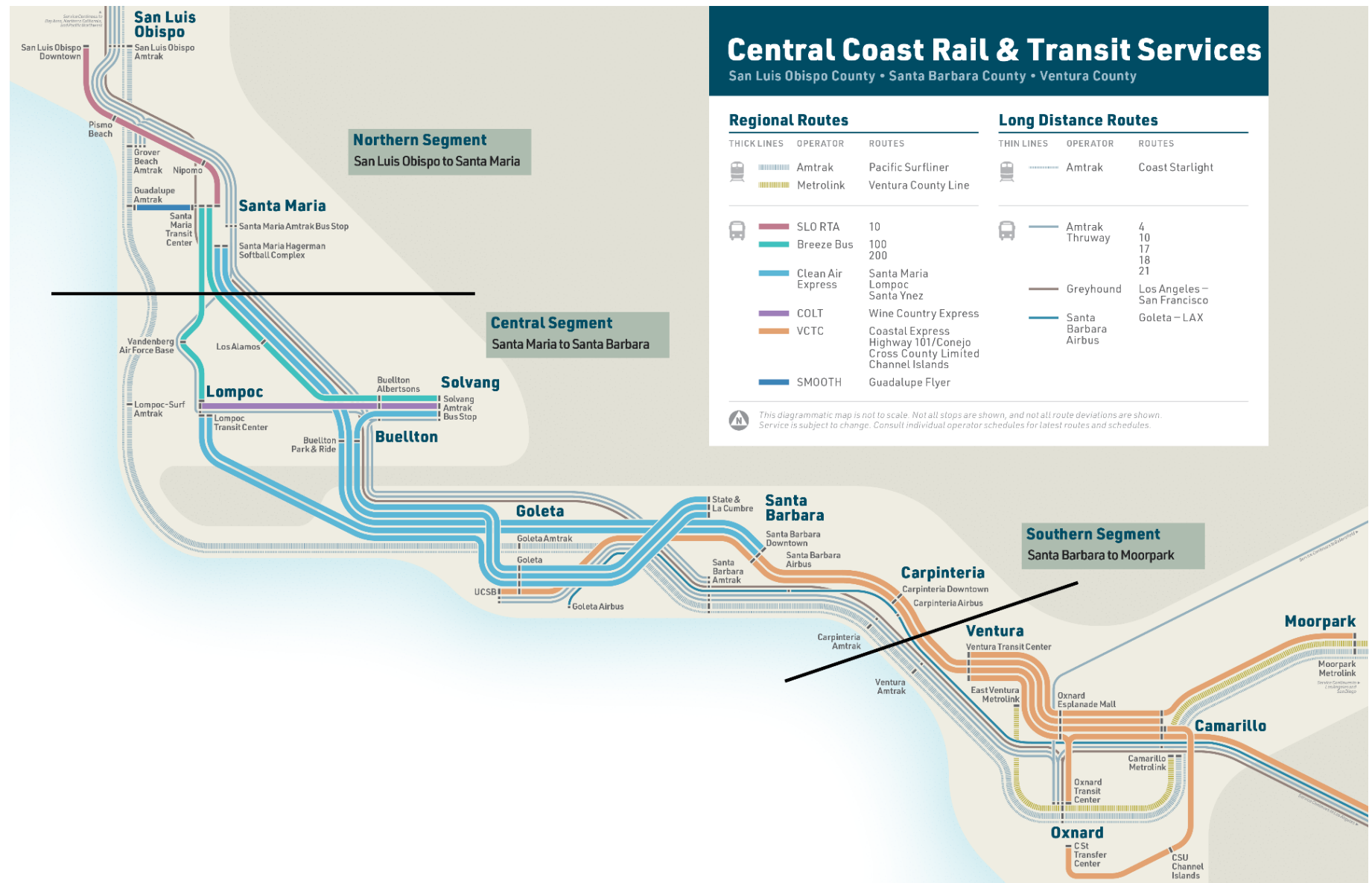
The following section is organized by interregional connections (serving points outside of this study area), and then by each of the three segments shown. It details the service levels of each intercity or sub-regional express route that might provide an opportunity for the network integration study.

### COVID-19 Pandemic and Transit Service

During the COVID-19 pandemic and into summer 2021, many transit services remain disrupted with reduced schedules or re-timed service. Pacific Surfliner rail service and Amtrak Thruway bus service have both been reduced, with restoration of pre-COVID service levels planned for 2022.

Other intercity bus services, including Coastal Express, Clean Air Express, and RTA Route 10, described throughout this study, assume pre-pandemic (2019) service conditions as the baseline. As a result of pandemic effects on ridership and commuting patterns, some routes or specific trips may be disrupted for many more months or even permanently.

Figure 3 Study Area Rail and Transit Service



## Interregional Connections (North of San Luis Obispo and South of Ventura County)

End-to-end travel as a single-seat ride for passengers through and beyond the 150-mile study corridor is provided by the Amtrak Coast Starlight and private bus operators.

### Coast Starlight

The Coast Starlight connects Seattle and Los Angeles, operating along the Central Coast region of California between San Jose and Los Angeles. One Coast Starlight trip operates each day in each direction, northbound and southbound. Both directions provide overnight service, departing one end of the corridor in the late morning and arriving at the other end in the evening of the following day. This service is operated by Amtrak, a quasi-public agency, unlike the Pacific Surfliner, which is administered by LOSSAN, a joint powers authority of nine regional transportation agencies, fully funded by the State of California, and operated by Amtrak under contract with LOSSAN. Within the study area, the Coast Starlight serves three stations: San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Oxnard. In the northbound direction the train moves through the study area between 3:30 PM and 7:00 PM, in the southbound direction the train passes through the study area between 11:45 AM and 3:30 PM each day.<sup>2</sup> The Coast Starlight is the only passenger rail service connecting southern and northern California.

### Greyhound and Flix Bus

Greyhound and Flix bus are private bus operators that provide intercity bus service. Each company has a route that connects San Francisco and Los Angeles. Each day the Greyhound route provides two trips in the northbound direction and three trips in the southbound direction.<sup>3</sup> Within the study area the Greyhound stops in Santa Maria, and at the rail stations in Santa Barbara and Oxnard. Most days of the week (excluding Tuesday and Wednesday) Flix Bus provides one trip in each direction, with stops in San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, and Ventura.<sup>4</sup> All Flix Bus stops are co-located with Amtrak rail stations or bus stops.

### Other Single Purpose Private Bus

There are other private bus operators in the region that serve more focused markets. Santa Barbara Airbus makes connections between Goleta, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, and the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Santa Barbara Airbus operates weekdays and weekends from 3:30 AM to 8:45 PM to LAX and 8 AM to 12:45 AM from LAX. SLO Safe Ride and American Star Trailways are private for-hire bus companies operating in San Luis Obispo County.

<sup>2</sup> Amtrak, Coast Starlight Timetable, effective August 8, 2019

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.greyhound.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.flixbus.com/bus-routes/bus-los-angeles-ca-san-francisco-ca>

## Primary Study Area Connections

### Northern Segment - San Luis Obispo to Santa Maria

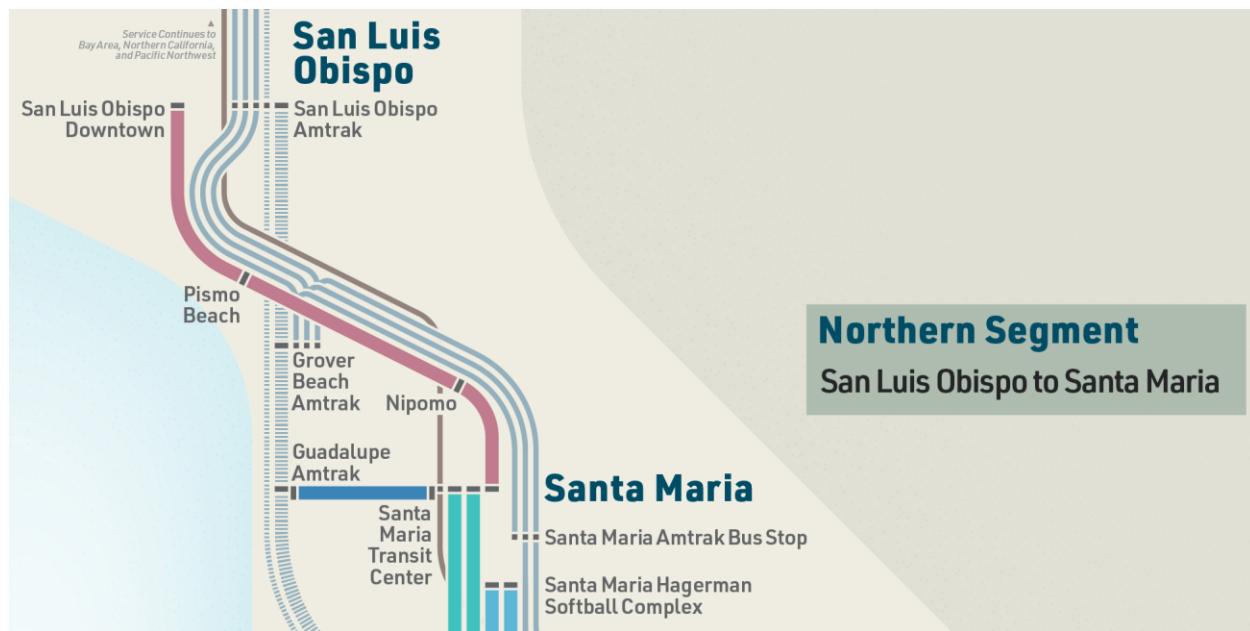


Figure 4 Study Area Detail of Northern Segment

The San Luis Obispo to Santa Maria segment is the northern-most segment within the study area. In addition to the daily Coast Starlight trip, the Pacific Surfliner operates two daily round trips in the northbound and southbound directions and the Amtrak Thruway Bus services provides an additional four daily trips between these two cities. San Luis Obispo is directly served by Amtrak rail. Although Santa Maria is the largest city in Santa Barbara County and identified on rail schedules, the train station is located 7 miles west in the City of Guadalupe.

The Pacific Surfliner serves San Luis Obispo, Grover Beach, and Guadalupe. In the northbound direction there are two trains that pass through this segment at 2 PM and 8 PM. All other northbound trips are served by Thruway bus service. Southbound trains travel through the segment at 7 AM and 4:30 PM.

Amtrak Thruway bus service supplements rail service with additional frequency and connections to destinations not served directly by rail service. This segment is served by Thruway Bus routes 21 (continuing service for the Surfliner between Santa Barbara and San Jose) and 18 (connecting to the San Joaquins in Hanford via San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles). In this study segment, Thruway service provides connections to Santa Barbara and Goleta, where passengers can then transfer to other rail services. In the northbound direction the Thruway trips pass through this segment between 8:30 AM, 12:00 PM, 5:00 PM and midnight. In the southbound direction buses pass through this segment between

3:30 AM, 4:30 AM, 9:45 AM, and 2:00 PM. Thruway buses stop in Guadalupe-Santa Maria (some trips) Santa Maria, Grover Beach, and San Luis Obispo.<sup>5</sup>

SLORTA Route 10 connects San Luis Obispo and Orcutt through Pismo Beach and Santa Maria. Route 10 operates hourly Monday through Friday with a few express trips northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon. The weekday service runs hourly from 5:45 AM to 8:30 PM in the northbound direction and 6:30 AM to 9:45 PM in the southbound direction. On weekends, Route 10 provides limited service every three hours on Saturday and every five hours on Sunday.<sup>6</sup>

### Central Segment – Santa Maria Area to Santa Barbara Area



Figure 5 Study Area detail of Central Segment

The Central Segment is characterized by a significant divergence of the rail corridor, which generally hugs the coastline, and the US-101 highway which is more inland. In this segment, the rail corridor does not directly serve any of the major population centers of Lompoc or Buellton (in the Santa Ynez Valley). The Pacific Surfliner operates two daily trips northbound and southbound, and Amtrak Thruway Bus service provides additional connectivity. The Pacific Surfliner stops in Guadalupe, Lompoc-Surf Station, Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria,<sup>7</sup> while the Coast Starlight serves Santa Barbara.

<sup>5</sup> LOSSAN and Caltrans, Pacific Surfliner Timetable, effective July 20, 2019

<sup>6</sup> Regional Transit Authority, Route 10 Brochure, effective December 31, 2017

<sup>7</sup> LOSSAN and Caltrans, Pacific Surfliner Timetable, effective July 20, 2019

Amtrak Thruway bus supplements Amtrak Rail service in this section with routes 21 and 17. Between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara, the Thruway Bus provides three daily trips in each direction. In the northbound direction the trips pass through this segment between 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM, 2:30 PM and 5:00 PM, and 10:00 PM and 12:30 AM. In the southbound direction buses pass through the study area between 3:45 AM and 6:30 AM, 9:00 AM and 12:30 PM, and 1:15 PM and 4:15 PM. Thruway Buses serve Santa Barbara, Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc, Guadalupe (some trips) and Santa Maria.<sup>8</sup>

Clean Air Express, Greyhound, and Flix Bus operate services between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara. The Clean Air Express provides peak hour, peak direction service from Santa Maria to Goleta and Santa Barbara with five total round trips on weekdays. Private, ticket-based service provided by both Greyhound and Flix bus from San Francisco to Los Angeles, has stops in Santa Maria and Santa Barbara.

### Southern Segment – Santa Barbara Area to Ventura Area

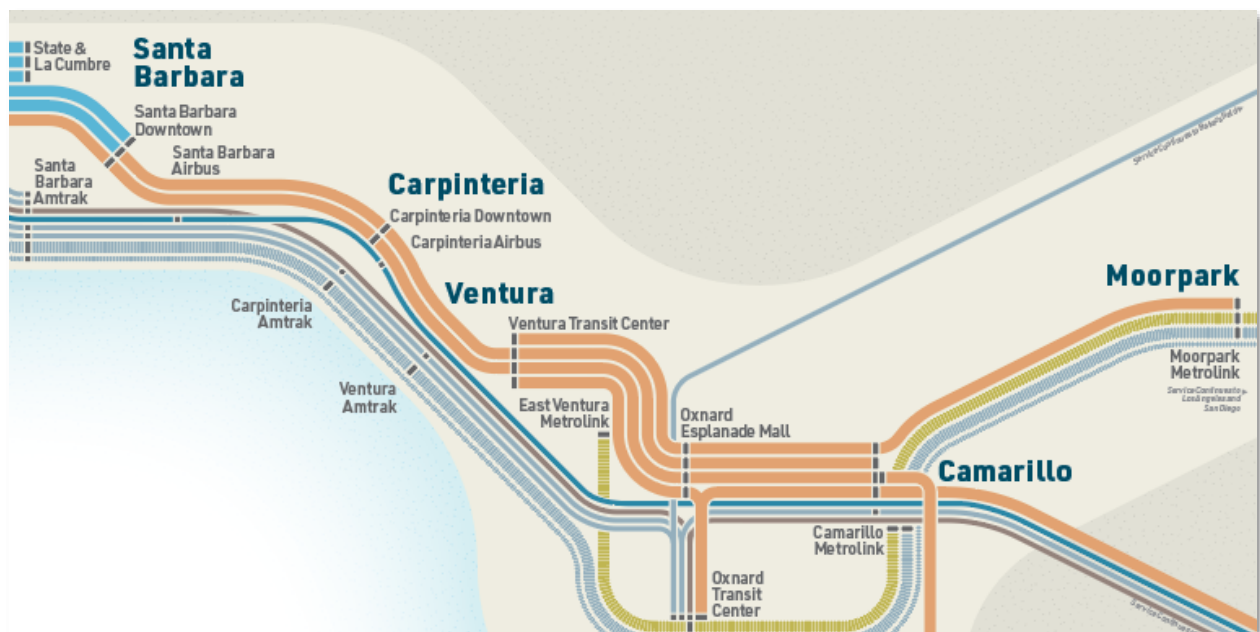


Figure 6 Study Area Detail of South Segment

Santa Barbara to Moorpark makes up the southern segment of the study area. The Amtrak Coast Starlight passes through once a day, in each direction, with stops in Santa Barbara and Oxnard. The Pacific Surfliner and Amtrak Thruway Bus also serve this segment. Between Santa Barbara and Ventura, the Pacific Surfliner operates five daily trips in both directions. The northbound trips pass through the study area between 6:10 AM and 9:50 PM; and in the southbound direction between 6:50 AM and 7:40 PM. Along this segment, the Pacific Surfliner stops in Goleta, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, and Moorpark.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> LOSSAN and Caltrans, Pacific Surfliner Timetable, effective July 20, 2019

<sup>9</sup> LOSSAN and Caltrans, Pacific Surfliner Timetable, effective July 20, 2019

Thruway Bus routes 10 and 4 operate through Santa Barbara and Ventura. With a higher level of rail service and a robust intercity bus system, fewer Thruway Bus trips operate in this segment. Between Santa Barbara and Ventura, the Thruway Bus provides one daily trip in each direction. In the northbound direction the trip passes through the segment between 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM. In the southbound direction the bus passes through the area between 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM. Like the rail service, the Thruway Buses stop in Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, and Moorpark, however, the southbound trip skips the Carpinteria, Camarillo and Moorpark stations.<sup>10</sup>

The Coastal Express, which is provided jointly by SBCAG and VCTC, connects Goleta and Camarillo, with intermediate stops in Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Ventura, and Oxnard. On weekdays this service operates from 4:10 AM to 7:00 PM in the northbound direction and 7:00 AM to 8:45 PM in the southbound direction. On the weekends the Coastal Express operates from 7:25 AM to 6:40 PM northbound, and 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM southbound. Service to Goleta only runs northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon on weekdays.

### **Other Intercity Connections**

This section describes the transit connections between other urbanized areas not included in the three primary segments described above. Connections to these cities are relevant to the Network Integration Study, however the current transit network and physical locations of some of the cities make them more difficult to serve directly on the backbone corridor. These connections may require transfers and a two-or more seat ride in order to connect to the primary rail network. The Guadalupe Flyer, which runs between the Guadalupe train station and Santa Maria Transit Center is an example of possible hub and spoke service, where limited service is provided from outlying areas to cities on the US-101 corridor where north/south transit is more frequent.

#### *Santa Maria to Lompoc*

Neither Santa Maria nor Lompoc are directly served by rail service; both urban areas have a rail station that is several miles outside of the major population center. The Surf train station is located on the coast almost 9 miles west of downtown Lompoc and there is no bus service between the city and the station, unlike the Santa Maria-Guadalupe connection provided by the Guadalupe Flyer.

Breeze Bus route 100 connects Santa Maria to Vandenberg and Lompoc. This route operates Monday to Saturday with eight trips in the southbound direction and seven runs in the northbound direction, spanning from 5:00 AM to 6:15 PM. Figure 7 shows transit service connections between Santa Maria and Lompoc as well as the distance of the rail stations (Guadalupe and Surf) from the city centers.

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<sup>10</sup> LOSSAN and Caltrans, Pacific Surfliner Timetable, effective July 20, 2019

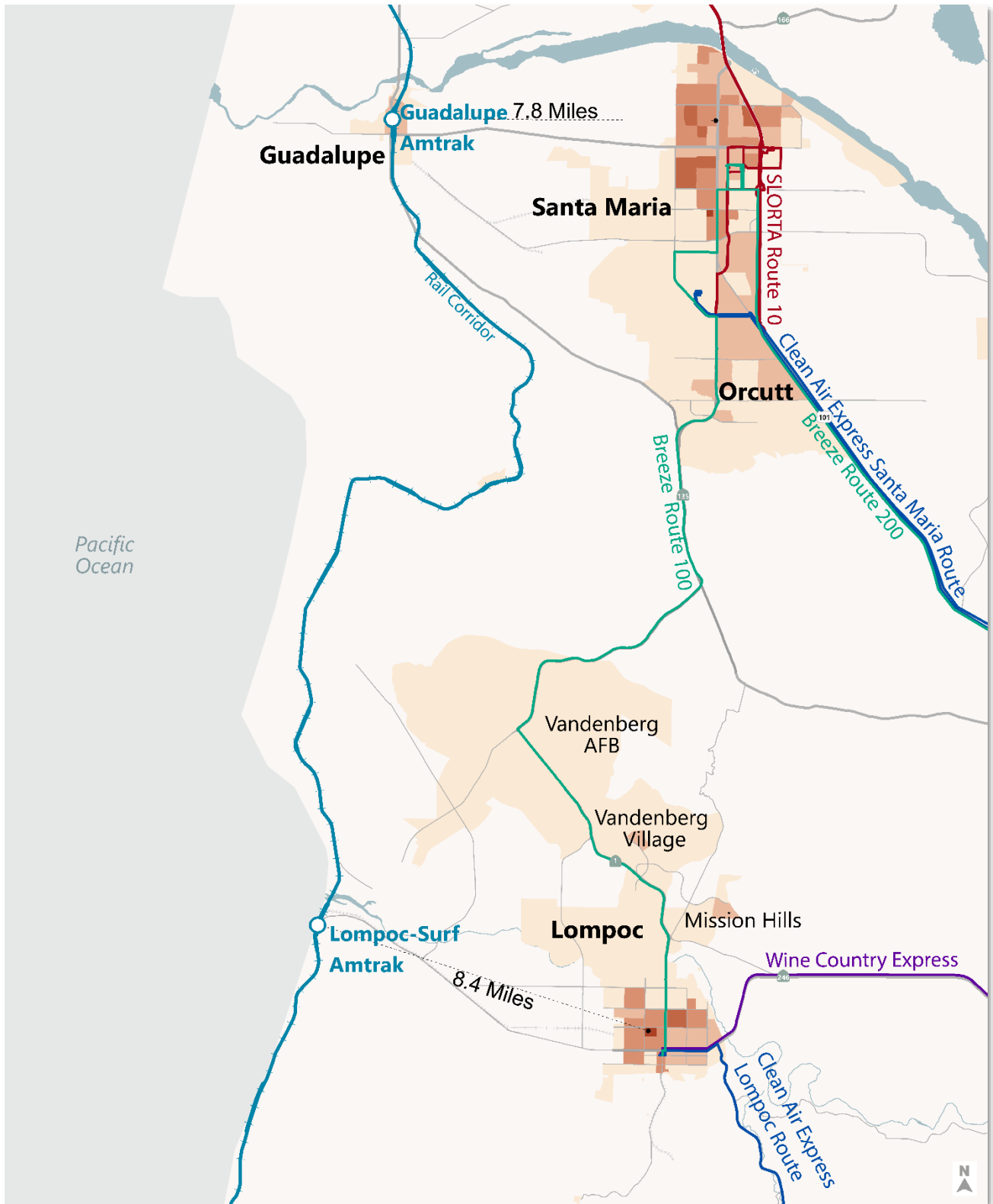
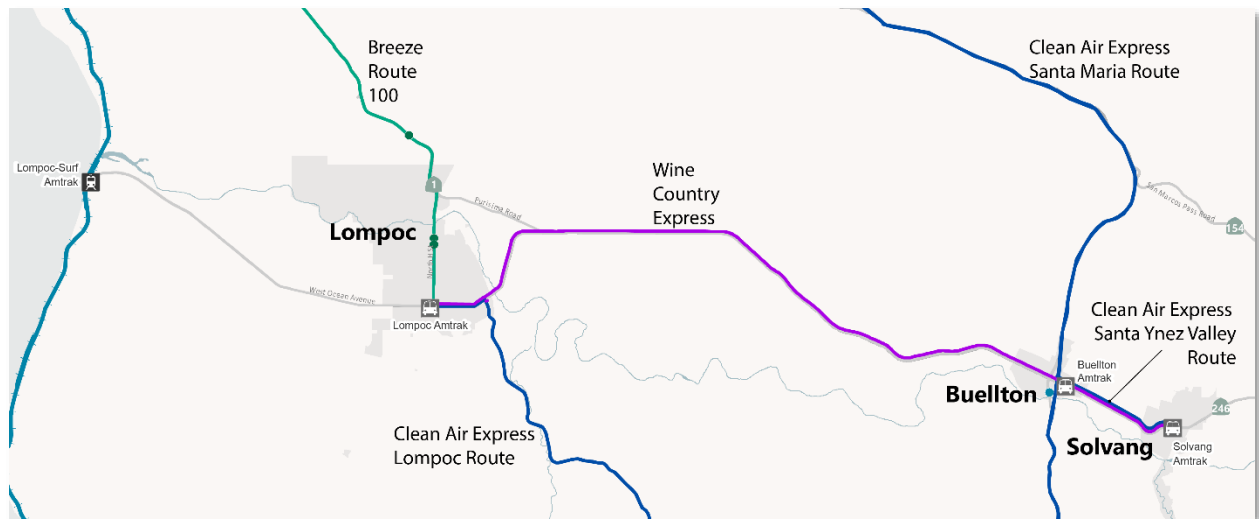


Figure 7 Santa Maria and Lompoc Connections

### Lompoc to Santa Barbara

The Clean Air Express connects Lompoc to Goleta and Santa Barbara with seven daily round trips (five to Goleta and two to downtown Santa Barbara). Lompoc Transit provides one round trip on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This trip departs from Lompoc at 8:30 AM, makes a stop in Buellton then terminates in Santa Barbara. The first northbound trip departs Santa Barbara at 3:30 PM. Wine Country Express provides one morning, mid-day, and afternoon trip between Lompoc, Buellton, and Solvang in each direction, providing connections to Breeze and SYVT.

### Santa Ynez Valley to Santa Barbara, Lompoc, and Santa Maria



*Figure 8 Lompoc and Santa Ynez Valley Connections*

The Santa Ynez Valley is not served by rail. Connections between the Santa Ynez Valley and Goleta/Santa Barbara are possible through the Clean Air Express, which operates only south in the morning and north in the afternoon on weekdays. As referenced earlier, the Thruway bus also operates a limited number of trips between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara via Buellton and Solvang. Connections between Lompoc, Solvang and Buellton can be made using the Wine Country Express. This service operates three round trips Monday through Saturday.

## Ventura County

Within Ventura County, Ventura and Moorpark are connected directly by rail using both the Pacific Surfliner and Metrolink. VCTC also serves connections that parallel the rail service between the City of Ventura and Oxnard, or Ventura and Camarillo and Moorpark. Thruway and Greyhound connections to Ventura are available via a transfer in Oxnard. Providing a direct Thruway connection between these cities presents an opportunity to decrease service hours and travel time.

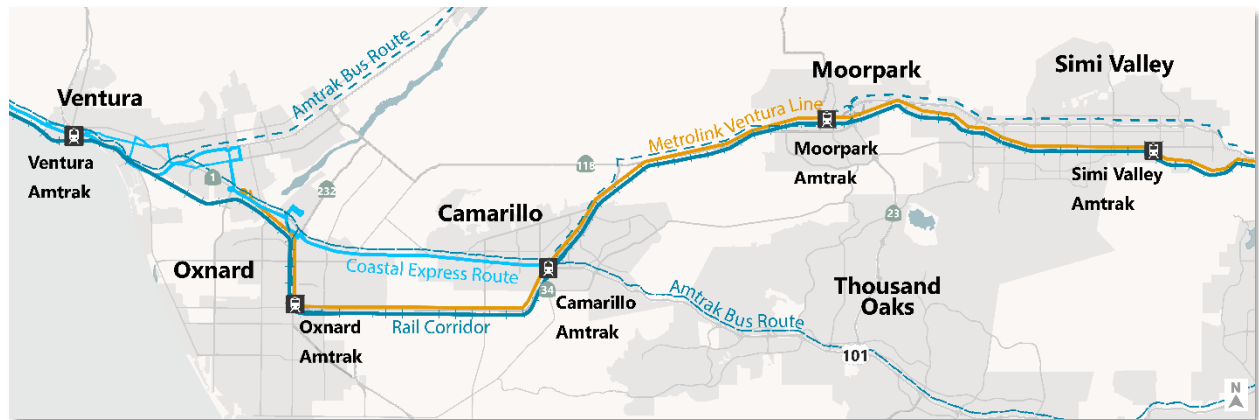
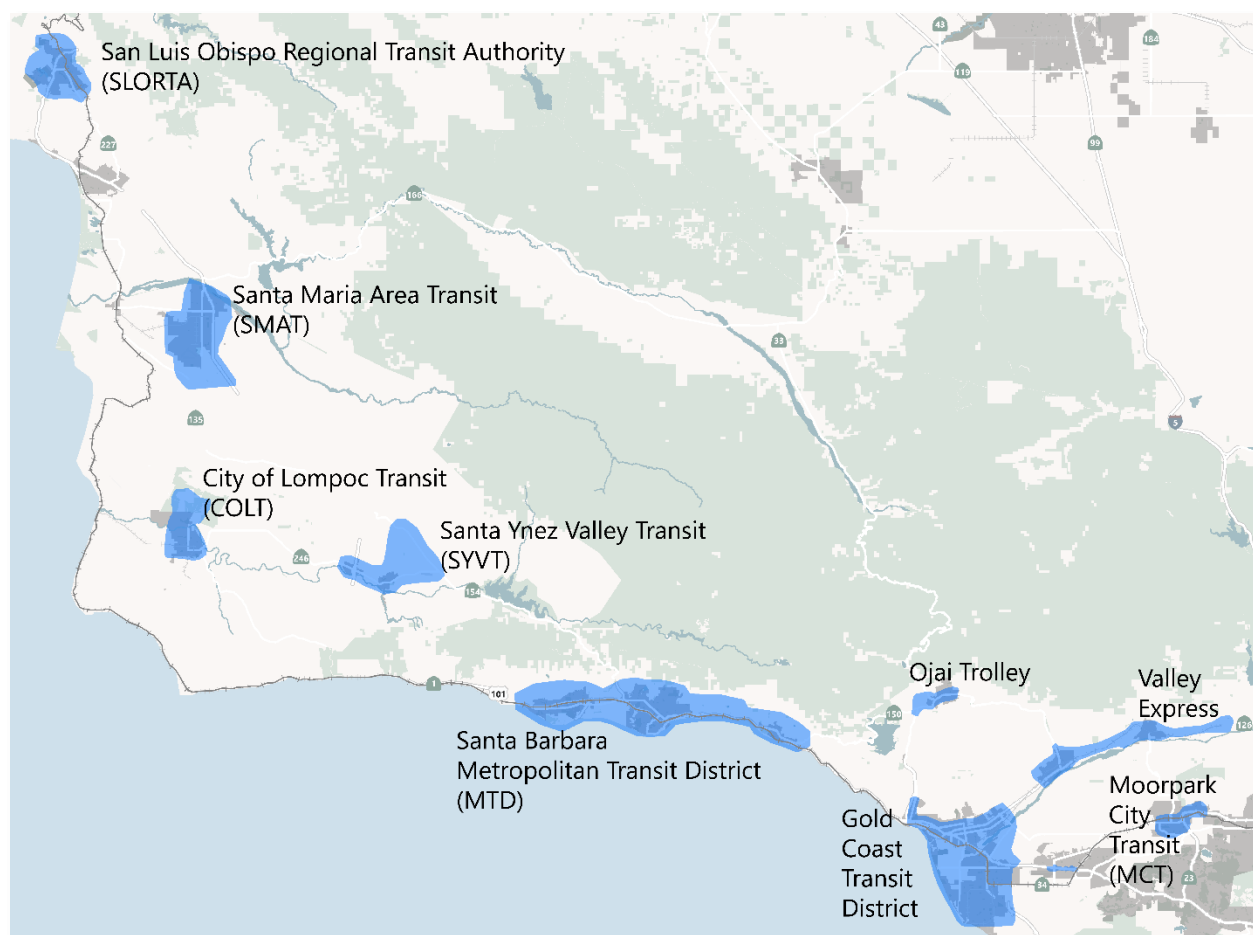


Figure 9 Ventura County Connections

## Local Bus Service

Many of the cities or sub-areas within the study area offer their own local bus service. These services represent an important component of connecting to and from other regional and intercity bus and rail service within the study area. Figure 10 shows the approximate coverage areas of local bus service within the study area.



*Figure 10 Local Bus Service Coverage in the Study Area*

Between the City of San Luis Obispo and the City of Camarillo, local transit operators serve a wide range of destinations, including multiple cities within a subregion (such as Santa Barbara MTD, Gold Coast Transit District, and Santa Ynez Valley Transit), in addition to subregional express services such as the Breeze and Wine Country Express.

Table 2 lists the local transit services in the study area along the rail and/or US-101 corridors, with notes detailing which local operators also provide express services within one study segment.

Table 2 Local Transit Services

| Local Transit Service                             | Areas Served  | Sub-regional Express Service   |
|---|---|--|
| SLO Transit                                       | City of San Luis Obispo   |  |
| SLO RTA / SCT                                     | San Luis Obispo County and North Santa Barbara County                             | Includes some subregional services on US-101 connecting coastal communities (North Segment of the study area)                                    |
| Guadalupe Transit                                 | City of Guadalupe   | Flyer service to Santa Maria   |
| Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT)                   | City of Santa Maria and surrounding unincorporated area (including Orcutt)        | Operates the Breeze subregional express buses connecting to Santa Ynez Valley and Lompoc (Central Segment)                                       |
| City of Lompoc Transit (COLT)                     | City of Lompoc and surrounding unincorporated area (including Vandenberg Village) | Operates the Wine County Express subregional express bus connecting to Santa Ynez Valley, and a limited route to Santa Barbara (Central Segment) |
| Santa Ynez Valley Transit (SYVT)                  | Buellton, Solvang, Santa Ynez, Los Olivos   |  |
| Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) | South Santa Barbara County, including Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria      | Operates subregional express on US-101 between Goleta and Santa Barbara (Central Segment)  |
| Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD)                | Cities of Oxnard, Ventura, Port Hueneme, Ojai, and unincorporated areas           |  |
| Moorpark City Transit (MCT)                       | City of Moorpark  |  |
| Camarillo Area Transit (CAT)                      | City of Camarillo   |  |
| Ojai Trolley                                      | City of Ojai  |  |
| Valley Express                                    | Cities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and unincorporated Ventura County                |  |

The following local bus services provide connections to passenger rail stations in the study area:

*Table 3 Local Bus Connections by Train Station*

| Station         | Operator / Routes | Notes  |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| San Luis Obispo | SLO Transit 3A/3B |  |
| Grover Beach    | SLORTA 21         | Indirect connection at nearby Grand Ave                                |
| Guadalupe       | Guadalupe Flyer   | Connection to Santa Maria  |
| Surf            | None              |  |
| Goleta          | MTD 6 / 12X       | Indirect connection at Hollister Ave                                   |
| Santa Barbara   | MTD               | Multiple routes within 1/3 mile of station                             |
| Carpinteria     | MTD 36            |  |
| Ventura         | GCTD 6, 16        | Indirect connection at Thompson or Santa Clara streets                 |
| East Ventura    | GCTD 6            | Indirect connection at Bristol Rd                                      |
| Oxnard          | GTCD              | Major transit center with multiple routes                              |
| Camarillo       | VCTC              | Intercity route hub (CAT fixed-route does not serve the train station) |
| Moorpark        | MCT 1 / 2         |  |

## Fare Structures

Transit agencies in the study area generally have similar fare structures, offering a combination of cash fares, day-use, multi-ride, and monthly passes, and reduced fares for seniors, students, and youth. Some agencies have coordinated fares so that a single ticket can be used to transfer between multiple agencies and between bus and rail. For example, Amtrak tickets can be used to transfer to buses operated by San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority, Guadalupe Transit, Santa Barbara MTD, and VCTC. The Rail 2 Rail program allows Metrolink Monthly Pass holders to travel on Pacific Surfliner trains within the same station pair (in the study area this would only apply to the southernmost area between Moorpark and Oxnard, as the Surfliner does not serve the Ventura Metrolink station).

Agency to agency transfers are possible on SMAT, Breeze, COLT, and Wine Country Express (WCE) although Breeze and WCE have a higher fare compared to other services, so a user would need to pay a reduced fare in addition to the transfer ticket. Table 4 illustrates the transit agencies serving the study area, fare media, fare types, and the rail transfer program options, where available.

Following the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 742, Amtrak is now permitted to sell bus tickets in California without requiring at least one leg of the trip occur on rail. This could have a significant impact on the Thruway bus service, allowing riders to buy only a bus ticket to make a trip that requires no rail component that the passenger would not otherwise be riding. For example, only two Pacific Surfliner trains continue north from Goleta to San Luis Obispo, but additional daily trips are operated by Thruway bus connection. SB 742 allows a customer to purchase a ticket between two stations north of Goleta and take only the Thruway bus without also needing to buy a ticket from the rail segment south of Goleta.

*Table 4 Transit Agency Fare Structures in the Study Area*

| Type         | Transit Agency         | Fare Media   | Full Fare <sup>1</sup> | Long Term Pass Types | Pass Fare (Regular/Senior, Student)              | Rail Transfer program  |
|--------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Rail         | Metrolink              | Metrolink Ticket or Metrolink App  | Distance-based         | 7-Day and Monthly    | Variable by Origin/Destination – 30%-36% savings | Rail 2 Rail program <sup>2</sup>   |
|              | Pacific Surfliner      | Ticket, eTicket via App or Website, Quik-Trak Kiosk, Phone, Agent, Onboard | Distance-based         | 10-ride and Monthly  | Varies by Distance                               | Rail 2 Rail program <sup>2</sup><br>Bus agencies listed below accept free transfer |
|              | Amtrak Coast Starlight |  |                        |                      | Varies   |  |
| Regional Bus | Amtrak Thruway Bus     | Same as Amtrak Rail  | Distance-based         | Same as Amtrak Rail  | Variable by Distance                             | Included with Amtrak trip ticket   |

| Type | Transit Agency                             | Fare Media                                       | Full Fare <sup>1</sup>                        | Long Term Pass Types   | Pass Fare (Regular/Senior, Student)  | Rail Transfer program        |
|------|--|--|---|--|--|------------------------------|
|      | San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority | Token Transit App, Cash, Passes, Online (Passes) | \$1.75-3.25                                   | Regional 31-Day Pass, RTA 31-Day Pass, SoCo Transit 31-Day Pass RTA & SoCo 7-Day | Day Pass - \$5.50, Regional 31-Day Pass - \$68/\$34, RTA 31-Day - \$47/\$23.5, SoCo Transit 31-Day - \$37/\$18.50, RTA & SoCo 7-day - \$16 | Free transfer from Amtrak    |
|      | Breeze                                     | Cash, Passes                                     | \$2.00  | Monthly Pass   | \$75/\$37.50   |                              |
|      | Guadalupe Flyer                            | Cash   | \$1.50  | None   |  | Free transfer from Amtrak    |
|      | Wine Country Express                       | Cash, Passes                                     | \$2.00  | Monthly Pass   | \$60/\$30, \$45, Fare Saver Discount Available   |                              |
|      | Clean Air Express                          | Cash, Passes                                     | \$7.00  | Monthly Pass   | \$150  |                              |
|      | Ventura County Transportation Commission   | Cash, Passes, Online (Passes), Phone (Passes)    | \$4.00  | 10-Ride Ticket, 31-Day Pass  | 10-day - \$36/\$18, 31-Day - \$120/\$65  | Free transfer from Surfliner |
|      | Santa Barbara Air Bus                      | Online, Cash                                     | \$55.00                                       | Round trip and prepaid discounts   | None   |                              |
|      | Flix Bus                                   | Online   | \$6.99-\$11.99, distance-based, varies by day | N/A  | None   |                              |
|      | Greyhound                                  | Online, Phone, Station, Independent Agent        | distance-based, varies by day                 | N/A  | None   |                              |

[1] Where there are multiple fares, the fare for regional service is listed

[2] Rail 2 Rail allows Metrolink Monthly Pass holders to take Surfliner within the station pairs of their pass at no additional charge

## Fare Media Technology

How users purchase and use their transit tickets varies from agency to agency, as well as from community to community. Cash has historically been used on-board buses as the primary fare payment method, while pass holders could simply flash their pass to the bus driver when boarding. Digital fare payment such as Token Transit, e-tickets, and other internet-based systems are increasingly being implemented, as is the case for some of the transit agencies within the study area. Amtrak began deploying electronic ticketing in 2012. Having consistent fare media in a region can help users transfer between agencies, especially those who may only take transit occasionally or are doing so as part of a recreational trip. However, access to digital fare media can raise issues about the equity of such systems, as not all members of the community may have access to smartphones or credit cards necessary to utilize these systems. Many agencies, particularly the larger ones, offer a variety of fare media options while smaller operators rely primarily on cash and passes, as shown in Table 4.

## California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP)

The California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP) is an initiative by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and partners to improve the current disaggregated public transportation network that residents and visitors often face. It was established to deliver on statewide goals of increasing transit ridership, reaching environmental targets, reducing public transportation operating costs, and improving the customer experience of travel. A feasibility study was completed in April 2020 as a result of *Market Sounding*, an effort to engage with both public and private stakeholders on transportation issues. The feasibility study developed three initiatives that have guided future *Market Sounding* outreach efforts:

- Ensure access to reliable and accurate transportation information
- Reduce friction in payments
- Create a statewide eligibility verification program

These initiatives also align with overall program goals. The *Market Sounding* effort is ongoing as of early 2021.

# Intercity Service Needs and Market Assessment

This chapter examines the current policy and planning landscape regarding intraregional and interregional passenger service along the Central Coast. These existing policies and plans provide the framework for what to achieve through bus and rail network integration. Next, the chapter considers origin-destination studies to detail the travel market need for improved intercity connections through the study area.

## Policies and Plans Review Summary

Over the last two decades, transportation agencies throughout the study area have evaluated travel market needs, considered fare integration, studied route and system performance, and developed strategic plans. In most cases, each agency's study objectives are mostly aligned to their own jurisdiction and connections with other services such as intercity rail or a neighboring transit agency are secondary priorities. Of greatest importance to the SBCAG Network Integration study is the 2018 California State Rail Plan (CSRP), which lays out an ambitious timeline for expanding rail service statewide.

Several of the local transit agencies or communities have conducted their own short-range transit plans (SRTPs) and any relevant regional transportation findings or recommendations are summarized here. The goals of the State Rail Plan are informed in part by some previous studies that are summarized below. The CSRP and the California Statewide Rural and Intercity Bus Study are the two plans which envision greater coordination between all of these travel markets and administrative agencies but do not include any specific recommendations for achieving that vision.

Each plan or study is summarized here with specific attention to items relevant to regional rail and bus network integration.

## California State Rail Plan (2018)

The California State Rail Plan, adopted in 2018, identifies goals and strategies for expanding intercity and regional rail service to compliment implementation of High-Speed Rail, as well as for improving service for intercity and long-distance travel. The California State Rail Plan is a component of the California Transportation Plan 2040 - the state's long range transportation plan – aimed at identifying a statewide integrated multimodal transportation system needed to reduce GHG.

To fulfill the 2040 Passenger Rail Vision to implement a statewide passenger rail network that provides efficient and convenient intercity travel, the CSRP identifies a phased approach to delivering the service goals through integrated express bus and rail services. This phased approach is organized into three periods: 2022 Short Term, 2027 Mid-Term, and 2040 Long-Term, each with their own statewide and regional goals and improvements. Table 5 summarizes these goals within the study area. Figure 11 shows a diagrammatic view of the service frequency goal for the LOSSAN North / Southern California region.

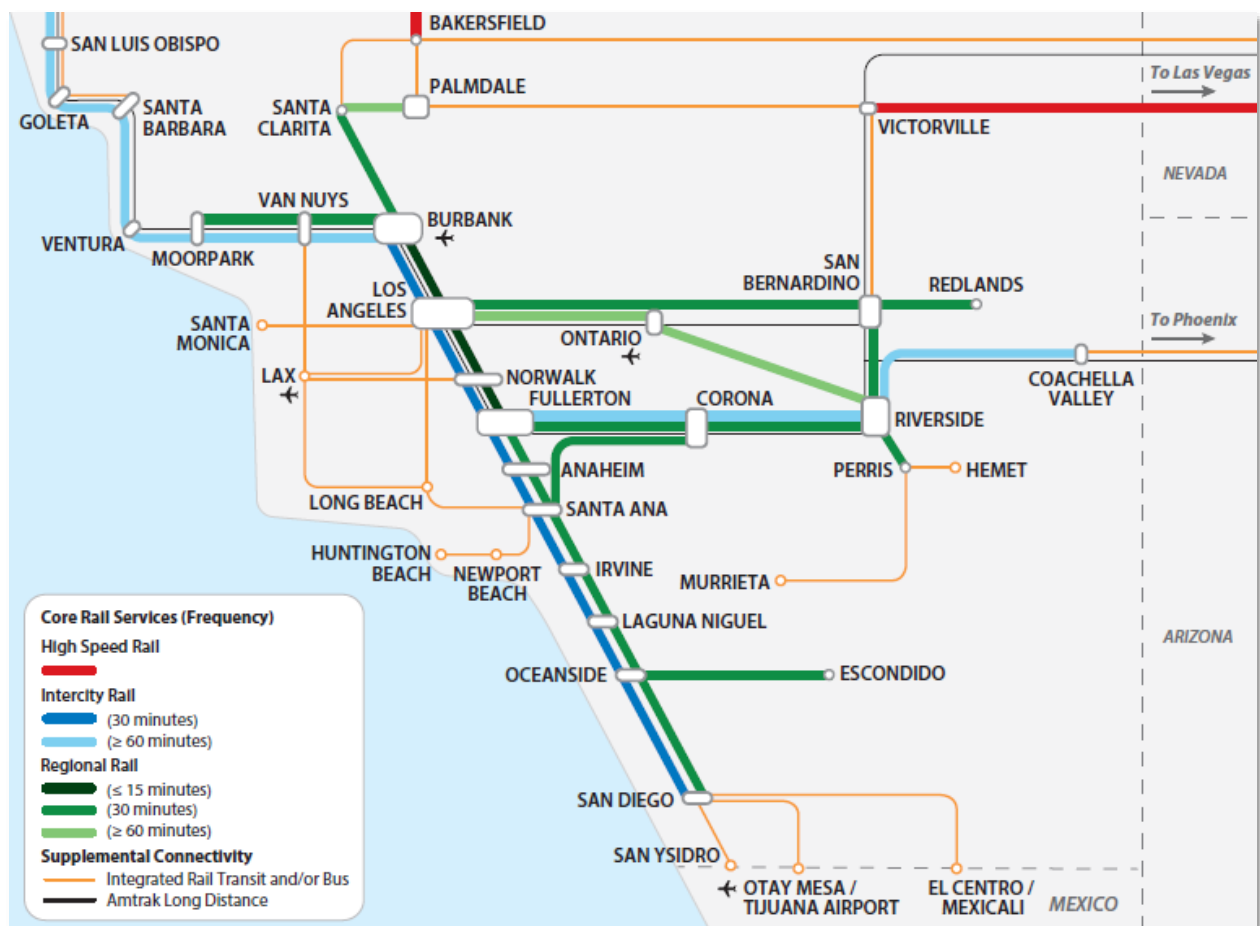


Figure 11 Southern California Service (2027 Vision) - 2018 California State Rail Plan

Table 5 California State Rail Plan Service Goals within the Study Area

| Year        | San Luis Obispo  | Santa Maria | Lompoc | Goleta | Santa Barbara         | Ventura   | Oxnard                           | Moorpark                 | Chatsworth          | Los Angeles |
|-------------|--|-------------|--------|--------|-----------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>2022</b> | Bi-hourly express bus service                              |             |        |        |                       | Bi-hourly rail service, hourly integrated service, at least half-hourly during peak |                                  |                          |                     |             |
| <b>2027</b> | 4-hourly rail service                                      |             |        |        | 2-hourly rail service |   |                                  |                          | Hourly rail service |             |
|             | Bi-hourly integrated service                               |             |        |        |                       |   |                                  |                          |                     |             |
| <b>2040</b> | Hourly integrated service, at least bi-hourly rail service |             |        |        |                       |   |                                  |                          |                     |             |
|             |  |             |        |        | Hourly rail service   |   |                                  |                          |                     |             |
|             |  |             |        |        |                       |   | Half-hourly express rail service |                          |                     |             |
|             |  |             |        |        |                       |   |                                  | Half-hourly rail service |                     |             |

Hourly intercity rail service is envisioned for LOSSAN North between Los Angeles Union Station and Goleta by 2040, with hourly integrated bus and rail services between Goleta and San Luis Obispo. Capital improvements to support rail expansion in the study area includes siding and double-tracking projects in the short-term. Integrated ticketing and fare coordination is considered necessary for implementation of the 2040 Vision, though specific recommendations and strategies are not provided. Table 6 summarizes the capital projects required to implement this vision.

For these improvements, funding has either been identified or is being planned for implementation by 2022, and funding for later phases is estimated based on funding levels currently available at the federal, state, and local levels. The near-term goal for year 2022 provides some level of bi-hourly service through the study area, using express buses north of Santa Barbara and rail service south of Santa Barbara. Given the higher travel demand between Santa Barbara and points south (which this chapter explores further), the plan also intends for as much as half-hourly peak frequency in combination with intercity bus service in the future. The intention for express service between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo includes serving the population centers that are not along the rail line itself, similar to the current Thruway Bus which serves other communities such as the Santa Ynez Valley.

The CSRP also acknowledges one of the main barriers for improving intercity passenger rail service is the ownership of most rail corridors by private businesses, specifically Union Pacific within this study area. Union Pacific owns the Central Coast rail corridor and operates freight service and controls the ability for the state and other public agencies to “slot in” passenger trains between freight operations. Where freight and passenger service overlap, achieving the passenger goals must account for the freight need as well.

Freight-passenger capacity improvements are specifically identified as a need on the Union Pacific coastline, as well as interchanging short-line operator Santa Maria Valley Railroad.

*Table 6 California State Rail Plan Capital Projects in Study Area*

| Year | Planning Area | Corridor                    | Capital Projects  | Capital Cost                      |
|------|---------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 2022 | Central Coast | San Jose-Goleta             | Central Coast Network and Service Integration Project Development   | \$2M                              |
|      |               |                             | Central Coast Layover Facility and Station Expansion  | \$12.5M                           |
| 2022 | LOSSAN North  | San Luis Obispo-Los Angeles | LOSSAN North Frequency Expansion Corridor Performance and Travel Time Improvement, Including Van Nuys Station Double-Tracking | \$236M                            |
|      |               | Goleta – Chatsworth         | Seacliff Siding and Extension   | \$23M                             |
| 2027 | Central Coast | Gilroy – Goleta             | Central Coast Layover Facility and Station Expansion  | (Part of a larger \$262M package) |
|      |               |                             | Goleta-San Luis Obispo Intercity Rail Increase and Bi-Hourly Integrated Service   |                                   |
| 2027 | LOSSAN North  | Goleta – Los Angeles        | Bi-Hourly Express Service Goleta-Los Angeles  | (Part of a larger \$550M package) |
| 2040 | Central Coast | Gilroy-Goleta               | Implement Central Coast Rail & Express Bus Service from Salinas to Goleta   | (Part of a larger \$1.5B package) |
| 2040 | LOSSAN North  | Goleta – Los Angeles        | Hourly Express Service Goleta-LA  | (Part of a larger \$700M package) |

## California Statewide Rural Intercity Bus Study Update (CSRIBS 2018)

This study is intended to provide Caltrans, Division of Rail and Mass Transportation and other stakeholders with an evaluation of the current rural intercity bus network and to identify changes since the previous 2008 plan. Rural intercity bus services provide an important connection between non-urbanized or small urban centers (fewer than 50,000 people) and larger urban economic centers. Rural intercity bus services are supported through Federal Transit Administration funds through the Rural Transit Program (49 United States Code, Section 5311, or simply "Section 5311"). The 2018 plan addresses decreased Section 5311 funding availability for the state and creating revised scoring criteria for allocating that funding in the near-term.

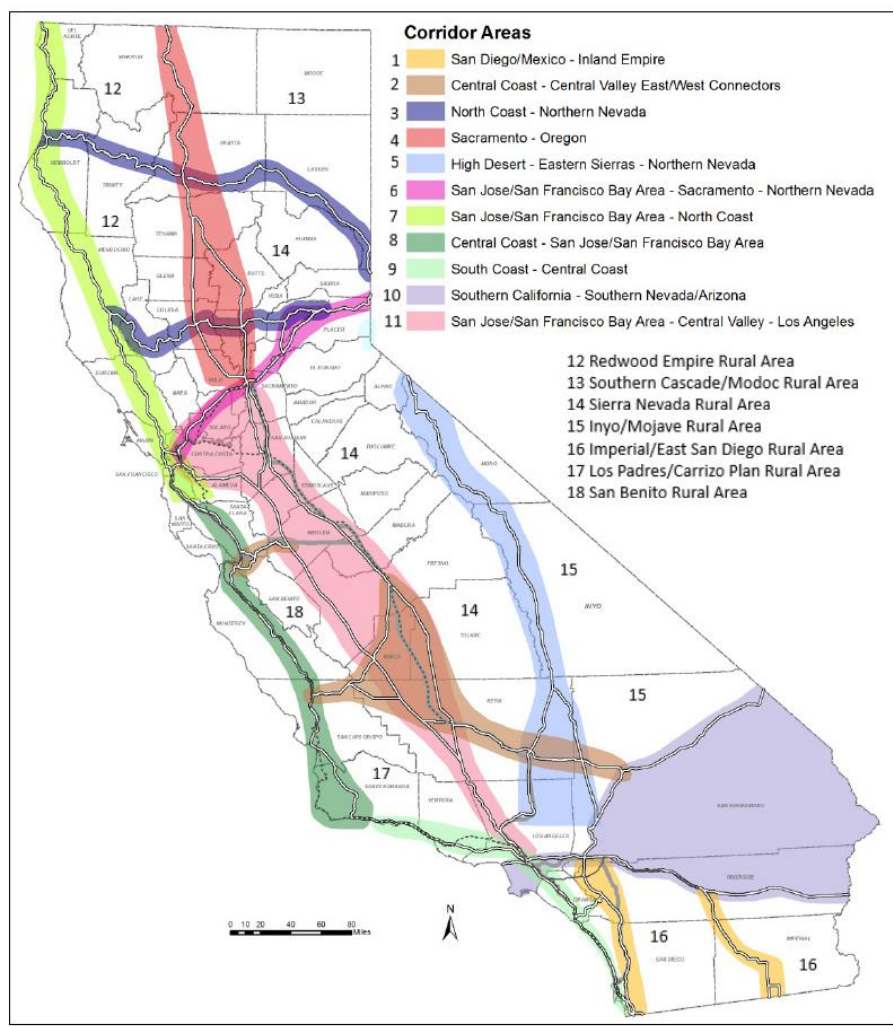


Figure 12 Rural and Intercity Bus Study Corridors

For the Central Coast corridor (#8), 18% of the region is identified as high need and 31% as moderate need. In the South Coast corridor (#9), 32% is identified as high need and 35% as moderate need. These "high need areas" are rural regions far from major population and employment centers with poor access to intercity transit and access to other services.

The study describes various transit corridor areas throughout the state in order to refine analysis to regional levels. The SBCAG Network Integration study area overlaps both the #8 Central Coast (San Jose/San Francisco Bay Area) and #9 South Coast (Central Coast) corridor CSRIBS areas. In the SBCAG Network Integration study area, as of the 2018 CSRIBS update, there were no Section 5311-funded bus services, despite several publicly-operated intercity services in addition to private for-profit operators. An analysis of transit dependent populations by corridor area is provided. For the Central

The plan also provides recommendations on how to meet future rural intercity bus needs. The recommendations address the idea that with decreased Section 5311 funding availability, not only do funding criteria need to be revised in the short term, but also that improved statewide coordination of intercity and rural transportation planning is necessary. The State Rail Plan is specifically referenced with respect to a flexible approach to delivery of service, but supportive of the rural and intercity bus system. This recommendation mentions the need to eliminate the requirement of purchasing a rail leg when booking a trip on Amtrak Thruway service, which has been achieved through SB 742. Another recommendation is to transform the organizational structure providing rural intercity transit through existing regional organizations with statewide support, to increase flexibility of funding and improve opportunities for local match, although no specifics are given for how to accomplish this.

### **101 in Motion (2004)**

This 2004 SBCAG study evaluated the southern 27 miles of the US-101 corridor in Santa Barbara County. It recommends the “Lane and a Train” strategy, which called for widening US-101 to add an HOV lane and implementing commuter rail service between Camarillo and Goleta that serves Oxnard, Ventura, Carpinteria, and Santa Barbara. It also recommends expanding commuter bus service north of Santa Barbara County and Goleta, currently served by the Clean Air Express.

Since the 101 In Motion study was completed, the US-101 HOV Lane Project has been planned and is presently under construction. Inclusive of the commuter rail concept, this was projected to cost \$626 million at the time. Supporting transit services (such as expanded North County express services) and TDM measures were projected to cost more than \$100 million in additional funds.

The commuter rail concept envisioned stops in Oxnard, Ventura, Carpinteria, and Santa Barbara, with the need to construct additional passing sidings and layover tracks in addition to expanding station parking. Rolling stock was envisioned as traditional locomotive-pulled coaches or self-propelled diesel-powered vehicles.

### **SLOCOG Region Wide Fare Improvement Study (2009)**

This 2009 study evaluated current fare policies involving transfers between one system to another and identifies potential strategies for improving policies and fare practices. Recommendations include developing a revenue allocation formula to help proportion out the fare received for regional passes. Fare technology used at SLORTA was assumed in this study, but it is important that fare technology is able to accommodate regional changes to fare structure and reporting. The study does not directly address the intercity operators identified in this Network Integration Study (Clean Air Express, for example).

## **SBCAG North County Transit Plan (2016)**

The SBCAG North County Transit Plan builds on an earlier 2006 plan and identifies new and outstanding recommendations related to service delivery in the study area. North Santa Barbara County includes the cities of Buellton, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Maria, and Solvang as well as unincorporated areas. North Santa Barbara County transit agencies provide primarily local or sub-regional transit as described in the previous chapter.

## **Relevant Intercity Topics in Short Range Transit Plans**

### *Clean Air Express SRTP (2019)*

The Clean Air Express' first-ever SRTP focuses on a future funding shortfall facing the service, which does not receive any federal transit funding and only a small amount of state transit funding. The SRTP recommends SBCAG pursue a contract operation arrangement with MTD to improve operating cost efficiency and to take the necessary steps to qualify for FTA funding. The study also examines the market potential to pilot a later run in the AM and PM peak between Lompoc and Goleta/Santa Barbara. The Clean Air Express is presently aligned as a unidirectional, weekday commuter service, and the SRTP does not conclude that there is a strong enough market within its own scope (travel between Santa Barbara or Goleta northbound to Santa Maria during the day) to operate bi-directional service. The SRTP does not consider the market potential of providing connecting service from the Surfliner or Coastal Express.

### *Metrolink 10-Year Strategic Plan (2015) and SCORE Program*

Metrolink's 10-Year Strategic Plan provides a short-term assessment of the current system, the environment in which it operates, identifies opportunities for improvements and interim steps to implement those improvements. Metrolink currently only operates in one portion of the study area between Ventura and Moorpark via the Ventura County Line. While the system is effectively at operational capacity, this segment is primarily constrained by operational agreements. The Plan identifies growth in the number of weekday trains operating on the Ventura Line by 2025, assuming operational constraints can be addressed, which is also acknowledged as a challenge and opportunity for improvement.

Southern California Optimized Rail Enhancements (SCORE) is a capital improvement program that identifies system enhancements to be implemented by the Olympics in 2028. These improvements enhance access to jobs, housing, and destinations while curbing greenhouse gas emissions and improving safety for people in the system area, as the region prepares for the many people who will visit in 2028. Improvements will benefit mobility for disadvantaged and low-income communities in the Oxnard and East Ventura station areas.

### *SLO RTA SRTP (2016)*

SLORTA's 2016 Short Range Transit Plan notes that Route 10 has the highest ridership of all RTA routes (based on FY13 data). The plan recommends several alternatives, including midday weekday express service, and additional northbound evening runs should be added on weekdays and weekends. Another alternative examines route revisions to reduce the cycle length to two hours, which would allow the same schedule frequency using fewer vehicles. To achieve this, route revisions in Santa Maria are considered; most trips currently do not serve the Hagerman Softball Facility where connections to Clean Air Express might be made. Reducing the route cycle time was projected to negatively affect ridership.

### *SMAT SRTP (2015)*

Breeze Intercommunity Service fares have not been adjusted since its inception in 2005. The SRTP proposed an increase in the Breeze cash fare from \$2 to \$2.25 and for the monthly pass from \$75 to \$85, but this adjustment has not been implemented. The City of Santa Maria adopted a Short-Range Transit Plan in 2020 after the literature review process had been conducted for the SBCAG Network Integration Study.

### *VCTC SRTP (2015)*

VCTC coordinates or directly operates a large and diverse service area with a mix of local and intercity service types. The SRTP identifies an investment need for an intercity maintenance facility, suggesting potential sites in Oxnard and Camarillo.

The SRTP recommends service performance standards for intercity services and service design guidelines, which could affect the viability of expanding intercity operations if there is not a market to support it or the trip is not operationally effective. Ridership productivity standards are recommended at 25 boardings per revenue hour on weekdays and 20 boardings per revenue hour on weekends. Maximum passenger load should be 100%, schedule reliability should be 90% and schedule efficiency should be 75%. The intercity service design recommended guidelines are in support of the State Rail Plan, with minimum peak headway of 30 minutes on weekdays.

## Other Central Coast/Regional Network Integration Studies

During the development of the SBCAG Intercity Network Integration Study, other regional planning agencies have also carried out similar exercises. This section briefly summarizes the neighboring studies that SBCAG is also a stakeholder in and their state as of June 2021.

### Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)

TAMC has drafted a *Monterey Bay Area Network Integration Study* that will determine optimal options for rail connectivity and operations, equipment needs, governance, and community benefits for service between Monterey County and Santa Clara, and for the Coast Rail Corridor. TAMC is a member agency of the Coast Rail Coordinating Council, a group of agencies supporting daily rail service between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The study area extends south to Santa Maria and Orcutt, including the rail corridor owned by Union Pacific that serves Coast Starlight and Pacific Surfliner Amtrak service, as well as Santa Maria Valley Railroad (Guadalupe – Santa Maria Station). The plan identifies multiple future planning scenarios including a *Phased* approach which envisions extended rail service between Salinas and San Luis Obispo every 2 hours by alternating rail and bus trips; and *Vision* service, which would offer bi-hourly rail service along the entire corridor. The 2018 State Rail Plan identifies San Luis Obispo as a mid-corridor hub for connecting trains from Los Angeles to San Francisco with timed transfers. This enhanced connection to San Luis Obispo overlaps with potential future “CRCC” service (described later in this report) providing once daily service between San Jose and Los Angeles. The Pacific Surfliner currently operates between San Diego and San Luis Obispo.

The draft TAMC network integration study poses questions about the potential governance of expanded integrated bus and rail services through the mid-term and long-term horizons. Potential governing bodies could include Caltrain, the Capitol Corridor, another existing public or private operator, or a newly formed entity. Given the scale of the long-term concepts and the complexity of interagency agreements, a new JPA may be necessary.

### San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)

SLOCOG is in the process of developing a *Coast Rail Corridor Study* in coordination with the Coast Rail Coordinating Council, whom SLOCOG is a member agency. The study will look at improved rail-bus connectivity and increased rail service for Central Coast residents and visitors, while addressing intercity and commuter options within the corridor. SLOCOG aims to improve rail service by establishing frequent and reliable service; provide multimodal connections between rail and bus; and create safe, affordable options for travel that link residents to jobs.

The study area includes the existing rail corridor between Salinas and Goleta and addresses the feasibility of developing commuter rail service between San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria, and Paso Robles. A future *Phased* scenario identifies 2 daily rail trips from San Luis Obispo north, and 4 trips south of San Luis Obispo by 2027, and 4 trips north with 8 trips south by 2040. The study, anticipated to be complete in

summer 2021, will identify rail operations and schedules, integrated intercity bus and rail service, infrastructure needs, equipment needs, governance, and local transit connectivity.

### **Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN)**

The LOSSAN Corridor Optimization study identifies strategies to improve operations on the rail corridor. The study is currently underway and publicly-available details are limited. A Cost and Revenue Options task document provides an overview of existing rider and ticket initiatives, as well as best practices and options for cost and revenue sharing. The study mentions that fare integration on shared corridors should be implemented through one of the business models outlined in the report while noting several related challenges including seamless customer experience, implementation costs, and backend systems that the state is developing through CalITP.

In discussions with Caltrans and LOSSAN during the development of the SBCAG Network Integration Study, the vision for statewide passenger rail services is to shift towards a regularized all-day service design with a “pulse” orientation designed for trains to depart major service hubs on a regular basis. The pulse scheduling concept for the Surfliner considers where trains in opposite directions can meet given the existing and planned infrastructure, while departing major terminals on regular two-hour headways or less.

## Travel Market Analysis for Intercity and Intraregional Travel

A travel markets analysis of the study area helps understand two key questions: 1) What are the major travel patterns in the region; and 2) are there travel patterns unserved or underserved by transit along the US-101/Rail corridor that could benefit from inter-city transit services?

These questions were answered largely by compiling data from previously completed travel behavior/travel market studies in the area, including the Central Coast Origin-Destination Survey (SBCAG, 2016) and Short-Range Transit Plans. Major takeaways from the travel markets analysis are:

- Most trips made in the study area are local trips (stay within their city boundaries). About 19 percent of trips are inter-city trips between cities in the study area, with about five percent of trips crossing county lines.
- While about two percent of observed trips cross both county lines, this long-distance driving trip is likely to be for recreational, tourism, or occasional business travel—suggesting there is very likely latent demand for a more regular and reliable alternative to driving.
- There are opportunities to enhance intercity transit service to better serve longer distance travel markets in key portions of the study area. Opportunities range from increasing public awareness about existing services to providing new services to fill existing gaps.

This section focuses on sharing key takeaways regarding overall travel demand in the study area and documenting opportunity areas for enhanced transit service in key travel markets.

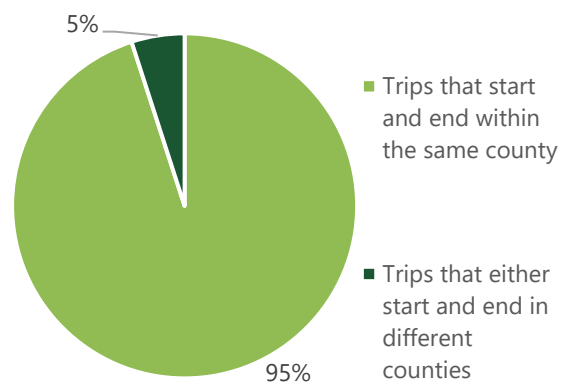
## Major Travel Patterns

The Central Coast Origin-Destination Survey utilized four distinct data sources to understand travel patterns throughout the study area - a license plate analysis, a mail-based survey of users, mobile device data, and traffic counts.

The Central Coast Origin-Destination Survey found that most trips in the study area stay within their counties. Of the almost 890,000 morning peak period trips originating in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, or Ventura Counties, five percent (about 44,500 trips) crossed county lines.

When looking at morning peak period trips originating in the major cities in the study area, just under 20 percent had destinations outside their city of origin.

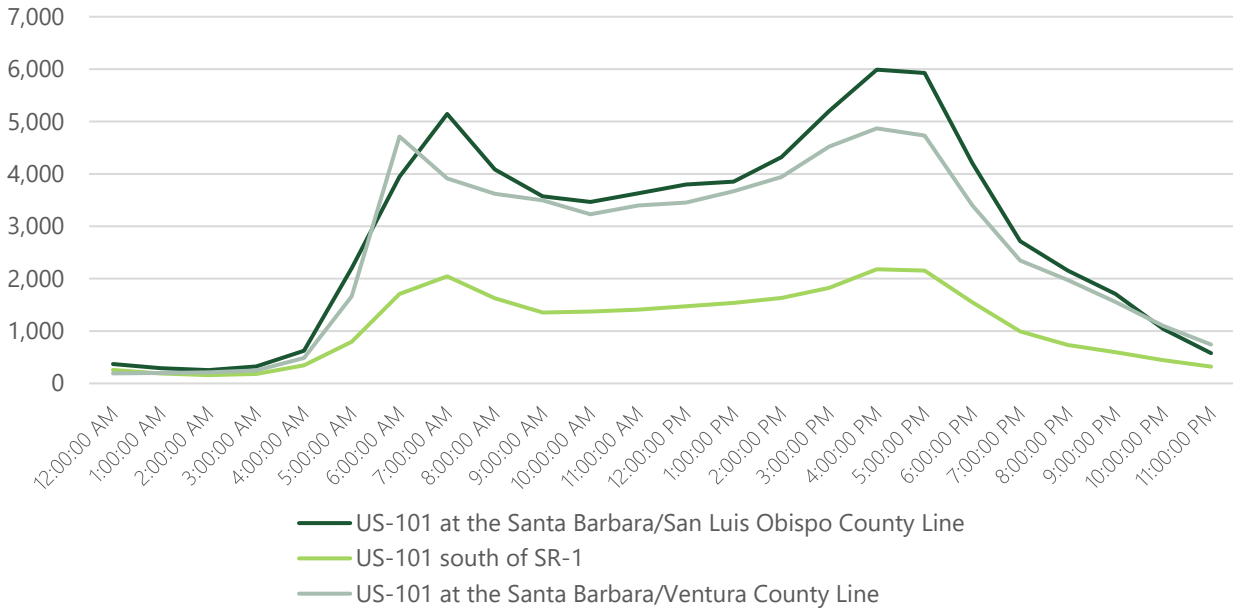
Further, the license plate analysis found that about two percent of observed trips passed through both the Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara/Ventura County lines; a trip which takes 1 hour and 40 minutes in the best conditions (and likely much longer depending on the exact origin and destination, given the size and geography of the counties). Traffic counts collected along US-101 demonstrates this as well. While there is significant traffic at the San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara county lines, volumes are substantially lower at the mid-point in Santa Barbara County, shown in Figure 14 below.



Source: Central Coast Origin-Destination Survey (SBCAG, 2016)

*Figure 13 Proportion of Local and Regional Trips*

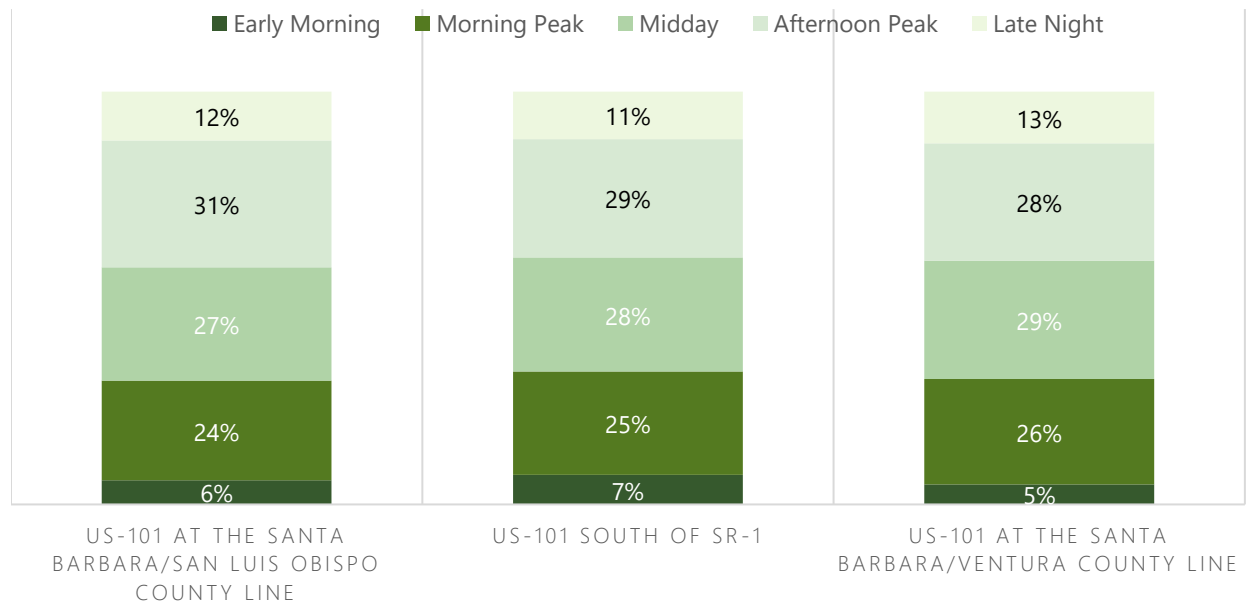
Figure 14 Traffic Volumes on US-101 Through Santa Barbara County



Source: Central Coast Origin-Destination Survey (SBCAG, 2016)

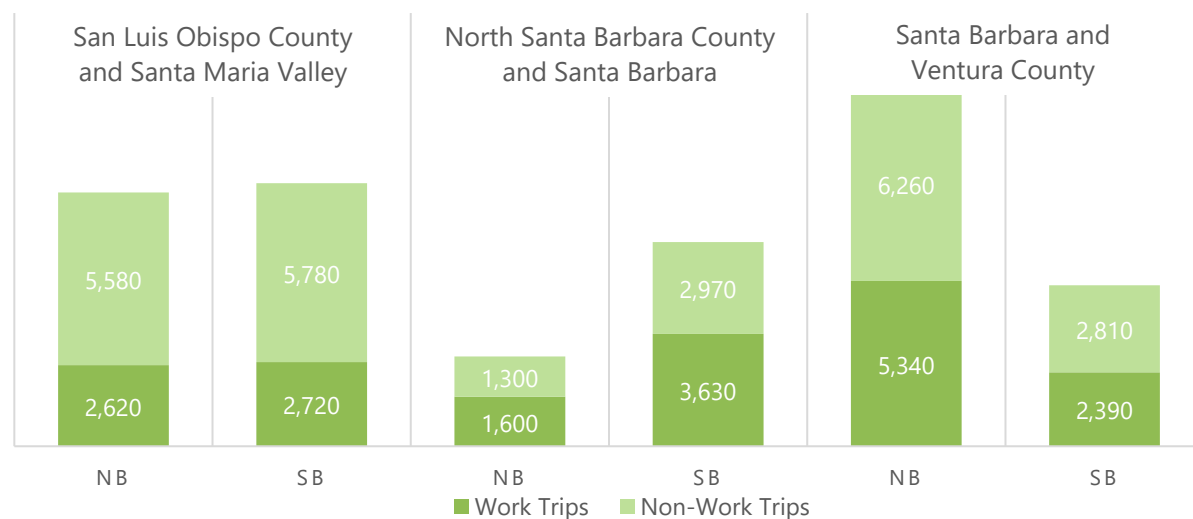
The all-day count data also demonstrates that distribution of traffic is relatively even throughout the day.

Figure 15 Daily Traffic Distribution by Time



Source: Central Coast Origin-Destination Survey (SBCAG, 2016)

While demand for longer intra-regional trips is relatively low, an analysis of inter-city trips demonstrates that there are several travel markets that will benefit from network integration in the study area. Three sets of key travel patterns were identified.



*Figure 16 Comparison of Key AM Peak Period Travel Patterns*

Source: Central Coast Origin-Destination Survey (SBCAG, 2016); Fehr & Peers, 2020.

## Opportunities for Inter-City Transit

The major inter-city and intra-regional travel patterns identified throughout the study area are the trips that will likely benefit the most from the outcomes of this study. To understand the opportunities that exist to better serve these markets, further exploration was done to understand key trip characteristics.

### Travel between San Luis Obispo County and Santa Maria Valley

Trips between San Luis Obispo County and Santa Maria Valley are largely occurring between San Luis Obispo, Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande, and Santa Maria, all served by RTA Route 10.

When looking at trip characteristics alone, this travel pattern is supportive of transit service. The balanced distribution of traffic between the northbound and southbound directions supports roundtrip transit service. Similarly, the relatively high percentage of midday trips (27 percent of daily traffic), suggests a market for all-day service. Finally, travel times on transit are comparable to driving between San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria due to the express service design.

Despite this, ridership on Route 10 decreased between 2012-2016 (although transit ridership nationwide declined during the same period), averaging between 15,000 and 20,000 monthly boardings in 2016, including a decline of about 17% between 2015 and 2016. Further, ridership data shows greater route productivity on the weekends compared to weekdays, demonstrating that there is a current mismatch

between service and demand. Further analysis identifies potential opportunities and challenges to increased transit mode share in this market:

- **Increase public awareness of offerings:** A user mail survey conducted for the Central Coast Origin-Destination Study found that only 30 percent of respondents were aware of RTA Route 10 service. Enhanced and targeted marketing strategies may increase awareness and have positive effects on ridership.
- **Challenge of serving agricultural sector:** The agriculture sector makes up almost 27 percent of the job market in Santa Maria, significantly greater than the roughly seven percent in the study area as a whole. Agriculture is a low-density employment sector, and jobs spread out over a wide area are hard to serve effectively with transit, even with walking and bike connections. However, opportunities may exist to partner with larger agricultural employers to develop first/last mile connections.
- **Challenges and opportunities of express service:** Route 10 and the Amtrak Thruway operate as express service, which significantly reduces travel time, raising attractiveness as an alternative to driving. However, it also limits connection opportunities and destinations served, particularly if the destinations have poor first/last mile connectivity.
- **Opportunities in tourism:** San Luis Obispo is a tourism hub in the study area. LEHD data demonstrates that 15 percent of jobs in San Luis Obispo are linked to “Accommodations and Food Services,” compared to just seven percent in Santa Maria and 13 percent in the study area as a whole. Further, Economic Impact of Tourism in San Luis Obispo County (Tourism Economics, 2017) found that almost 40 percent of tourists, or 2.6 million annual visitors, were day visitors. Day visitors provide an opportunity to inter-city and intra-regional transit ridership. A partnership with San Luis Obispo’s Tourism Business Improvement District to increase awareness of transit options for tourists may provide increased ridership opportunities. However, inter-city transit will only be a viable option for tourists if it is paired with strong local mobility options once they arrive.

### Travel between North Santa Barbara County and Santa Barbara/Goleta

The North Santa Barbara County/Santa Barbara travel market primarily consists of trips between the cities of Santa Maria, Lompoc, Solvang, and Santa Ynez and Santa Barbara. Clean Air Express provides peak period commuter service for these trip pairs on weekdays only.

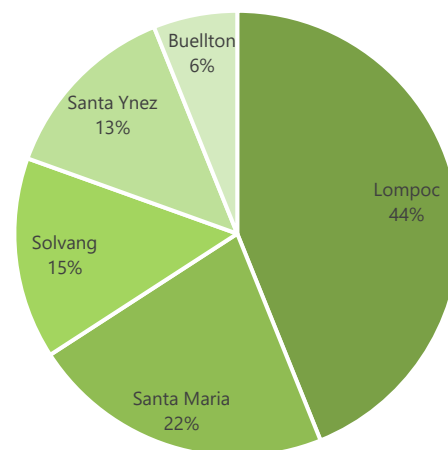
Clean Air Express service is well utilized but is limited to peak directional service and only during peak hours. Four trips serve Santa Barbara, while nine serve Goleta, and the total ridership for the Santa Barbara routes is less than half of the total Goleta ridership. The current bus capacity is sufficient to accommodate ridership, although there have been periods when certain trips were regularly at full capacity.

Due to Clean Air Express' emphasis on the peak period and one-way service, this travel market is underserved by transit most of the day. Expanding Clean Air Express to all-day and bi-directional service would address this gap and help meet California State Rail Plan transit trip goals in the study area. US-101 volumes demonstrate that while this study area segment has the least overall travel when comparing across the three key travel markets, demand is relatively level from the AM peak through the PM peak. Given the long distance between Goleta and Santa Maria and points north, there may be an unmet need for more regular express transit service as people may be more interested in making the trip if they do not have to drive themselves. Finally, 55 percent of trips in this travel market are commute trips, the highest percentage of the three key travel patterns. Lasting effects of COVID-19 may include increases in telecommuting and therefore lower demand for commuter transit service. Expanding service and diversifying the types of trips served could increase the resiliency of the service post-pandemic.

### Travel between Ventura County and Santa Barbara

The Ventura County/Santa Barbara travel market is the largest of the three and is a focus point of the 101 in Motion study (SBCAG, 2006), which recommends implementing commuter rail service to address freeway congestion. The Origin-Destination Survey found that this market is primarily comprised of travel between the cities of Ventura, Oxnard, and Carpinteria, and Goleta and Santa Barbara.

The Coastal Express currently serves this travel market and comprises over 30% of VCTC system ridership. Despite the strength of the travel market, there is a significant midday transit service gap. The Pacific Surfliner and Thruway also serve this market area and are able to provide time-competitive service. However, rail service is limited to only a few trips per day.



Source: Central Coast Origin-Destination Survey (SBCAG, 2016)

*Figure 17 Home Cities of North County to Santa Barbara Commuters*

High, all-day auto demand on US-101 with major trip pairs all immediately off the freeway demonstrates the potential of this market area for rail and transit service expansion to meet California State Rail Plan goals and provide viable alternatives to driving alone on this corridor. The Origin-Destination Study survey found that 12 percent of survey respondents from this corridor shifted from drive-alone to carpool with the introduction of HOV lanes, demonstrating a willingness of travelers to shift to shared modes. If travel time-competitive rail and transit service with a robust schedule were introduced to this market, there is potential for a significant shift to transit.

### Longer Intra-Regional Trips

Long-distance trips in the study area are time consuming - without traffic, it takes approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes one-way to drive between San Luis Obispo and Oxnard. As demonstrated, there is known, existing travel demand for mid-range intraregional trips between cities along the US-101 corridor. What is harder to measure is the potential latent travel market for longer trips. Convenient, regular, and reliable transit service offering a single-seat ride through the study area could increase mode share, especially since this service does not currently exist. Such a service would fulfill the potential for shifting shorter distance travel to transit as well as creating new opportunities for longer travel that is less desirable by car. Express bus service provides a significant competitive advantage in this case compared to train travel. Although trains are less affected by traffic congestion, the rail corridor in this region is indirect between Ventura and San Luis Obispo (as illustrated in the *Existing Conditions* chapter), lowering train operating speed and lengthening overall travel time, in addition to not directly serving key urbanized areas. The US-101 corridor offers a more direct, inland route with relatively little congestion outside of the Santa Barbara-Carpinteria corridor, which express buses can use to operate service with comparable travel times to driving.

# Challenges in Coordinating Intercity Bus and Rail Services

This chapter explores the operational constraints facing schedule and route integration of intercity transit services in the study area. Three bus services operate directly on the US-101 corridor through the study area, and each intersect with the next in line, but these services are not designed to connect with each other, and in some cases connecting stops are too far apart for a practical transfer.

From north to south, the backbone intercity bus services along the US-101 corridor serve many of the same major communities as the Amtrak rail service and include:

- **SLORTA Route 10** - operates in the Northern Segment between San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria
- **Clean Air Express** - commuter bus service operates in the Central Segment from Santa Maria to Santa Barbara and Goleta
- **Coastal Express** – operates in the Southern Segment connecting Santa Barbara/Goleta with Ventura, Oxnard, and Camarillo via several route variations

These services provide end-to-end connections from one study area segment to another connecting the major urban centers, though as noted earlier each currently have challenges with the frequency and directionality by which they operate. In many cases, trips follow the primary commute patterns, so mobility throughout the day is limited.

Travel through the study region to and from communities outside the US-101 corridor is a more complex question to consider, although this does not diminish its importance. Providing express bus service directly to these communities as part of a regional trip between Ventura County and San Luis Obispo would mean less efficient intercity bus trips for those riding end-to-end or beyond the study area. Other public transit services operate throughout the study area and some routes provide these connections:

- **Guadalupe Flyer** – connecting service between Guadalupe (where the train station is located) and Santa Maria
- **Breeze Bus Route 100** – sub-regional express service between Santa Maria, Orcutt, Vandenburg Air Force Base, and Lompoc
- **Breeze Bus Route 200** – sub-regional express service between Santa Maria and the Santa Ynez Valley
- **Wine Country Express** – sub-regional service between Lompoc and the Santa Ynez Valley
- **MTD 12x and others** – sub-regional express bus between Santa Barbara and Goleta

These services are relevant for extending the reach of the US-101 corridor to communities east or west of the highway in Santa Barbara County, or alternatively for ensuring connectivity from Pacific Surfliner rail service to major population centers in the case of the Surf/Lompoc station and the Guadalupe/Santa Maria station.

## Existing Transfer Points Between Intercity Services

The transfer locations for intercity bus trips between connecting operators are Santa Maria and Santa Barbara/Goleta. At least two of the backbone intercity bus operators serve each of these communities, allowing for theoretical transfer opportunities or potentially run-through service (one operator providing single-seat service along two routes in the same direction).

### Santa Maria

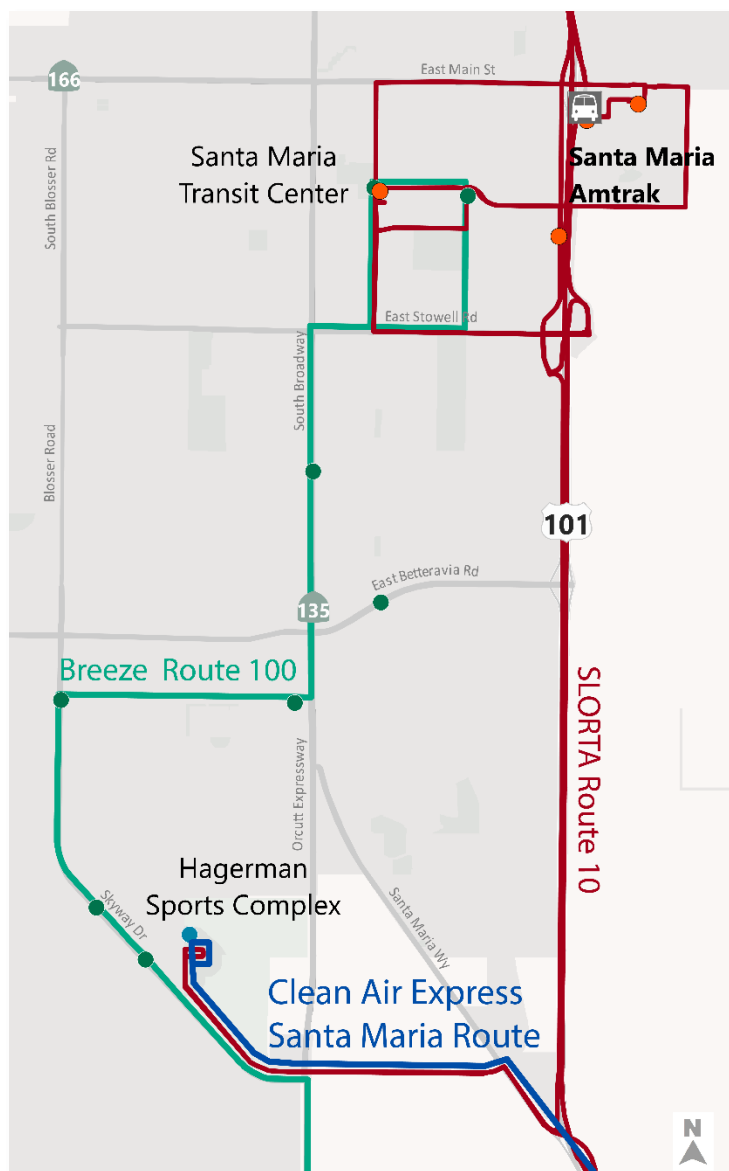


Figure 18 Santa Maria Intercity Connections

There two main transfer opportunities in Santa Maria are the Hagerman Softball Complex and Santa Maria Transit Center. Route 10 and the Clean Air Express both serve the Hagerman Softball Complex, south of Santa Maria. However, only one northbound and one southbound Route 10 trip per day go to the Hagerman stop; most Route 10 trips terminate at the Santa Maria Transit Center, about five miles north of the Hagerman stop. The Hagerman parking lot is the only stop Clean Air Express serves in the Santa Maria area, and the Breeze 100 route to Lompoc stops near the Hagerman complex at the Santa Maria airport on Skyway Drive. This means users transferring between Route 10 and Clean Air Express or Breeze 100 would need to use some other method (walk, bike, ridehail, etc.) between the Hagerman stop and Santa Maria Transit Center for Route 10 trips not stopping at Hagerman.

The nearest rail station to Santa Maria is in Guadalupe, approximately eight miles from Santa Maria on congested rural roads. Bus service to Santa Maria from the rail station is provided by the Guadalupe Flyer.

Although Thruway buses technically serve Santa Maria instead of the Guadalupe train station, the Thruway stop is located just off the US-101 off-ramp for Main Street, on Nicholson Ave. This location is almost 1.5

miles from the Santa Maria Transit Center, although Route 10 has a connecting stop just a short walk around the corner. Despite that, the location of this bus stop prioritizes a small reduction in bus travel time over optimizing passenger access to destinations in the City of Santa Maria. A more effective and central connecting point for passengers would be at the Santa Maria Transit Center.

## Santa Barbara and Goleta

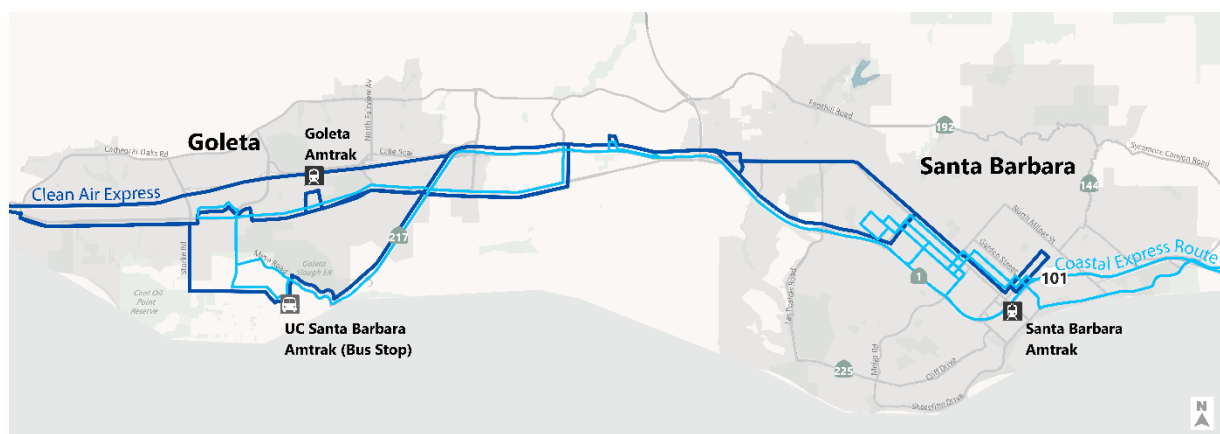


Figure 19 Santa Barbara and Goleta Connections

Santa Barbara is served by a train station located on State Street close to downtown Santa Barbara. The Santa Barbara MTD transit center is located in downtown Santa Barbara, where many of their bus routes converge. The MTD transit center and the rail station are 0.9 miles apart and it takes about 20 minutes to walk between the two locations. MTD operates a shuttle on State Street for connectivity between the waterfront, train station, and access to the transit center. Other MTD routes are also a short walk from the train station rather than the full distance to the transit center.

The physical separation between the train station and the transit center is a barrier to an integrated regional system. Although the Santa Barbara rail station is close to regional destinations and is more centrally located than other rail stations in the region, it is separated from the main transit hub in the community. This gap adds time and friction to regional travelers who must travel between the transit center and the rail station to transfer between rail or Greyhound bus and MTD services.

MTD also operates several routes which connect the City of Santa Barbara and the City of Goleta, providing potential additional express or bridge service between the long-distance Clean Air Express and Coastal Express routes. The 12X Goleta Express is one example that makes this potential link. There are no bus routes except the Thruway that directly serve the Goleta or Santa Barbara train stations.

Although the Goleta train station is not directly served by bus, the Clean Air Express serves a stop about a block from the Goleta train station. MTD routes 6 and 12x (which is the express route between Santa Barbara and Goleta) serve Hollister Avenue at La Patera Lane, a short walk from the train station. The nearest Coastal Express stop is at Aero Camino & Hollister Avenue, a 10-minute walk and 0.7 miles away

from rail station. Clean Air Express and the Coastal Express share many stops in Goleta and Santa Barbara, listed in Table 7.

*Table 7 Clean Air Express and Coastal Express Shared Stop Locations*

| City                                      | Shared Stop Location  |
|---|---|
| Goleta                                    | University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB)                      |
|   | Cortona Dr at Castilian Dr  |
|   | Castilian Dr at Los Carneros Way                                    |
|   | Hollister Ave at Cremona Dr   |
|   | Hollister Ave at Aero Camino  |
|   | Hollister Ave at Pine Ave   |
|   | Hollister Ave at Kellogg Way  |
|   | Hollister Ave at Patterson Pl                                       |
| County Administration Campus (Calle Real) |   |
| Santa Barbara                             | Cottage Hospital  |
|   | Anacapa St at Anapamu   |
|   | Anacapa St at Carrillo St/De La Guerra Rd (Santa Barbara City Hall) |

Most of these stops are typical on-street bus stops (as opposed to park & rides or transit stations in Santa Maria and Lompoc) near to employer destinations and many are also served by local MTD bus routes.

## Connecting Other Urban Centers

With a focus on providing intercounty service along US-101, the logical urban centers to connect are the cities of Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Buellton, Santa Maria, and San Luis Obispo. However, the study area includes other communities with varying connections to either the US-101 or rail corridor.

The study area extends as far to the southeast as Moorpark, in part because it is a logical choice where continuing service provided by Metrolink towards Los Angeles and points south becomes more frequent. Although Camarillo also is located on the rail and US-101 corridors and served directly by some VCTC Coastal Express trips, Moorpark is only served by the VCTC East-West Connector, a limited sub-regional express route.

The City of Lompoc and Vandenberg Village/Space Force Base is a population and employment center, located between both US-101 and the rail corridor, about 25-30 minutes west of Buellton on SR 246, and about 20 minutes east of the Pacific Surfliner Surf station. There is no transit service between Lompoc-Surf and Lompoc and there is also no development around the station. Additionally, Thruway buses do not stop at the Lompoc-Surf station. Lompoc is connected to the region by the Clean Air Express, with seven trips to the Goleta and Santa Barbara area; the Breeze 100 with service north to Santa Maria; and the Wine Country Express with service east to Buellton and Solvang.

The Santa Ynez Valley (Buellton, Solvang, Santa Ynez, and other unincorporated communities) is likewise isolated from rail service, although US-101 runs directly through Buellton. These communities are connected to the region via two Clean Air Express trips from Buellton, Breeze 200 service to/from Santa Maria, and the Wine County Express. Some Thruway trips provide additional Surfliner connections in Solvang and Buellton.

These issues are primarily geographic; connectivity to these communities is important but extending a regional service to serve Lompoc adds substantial travel time for a long-distance route. An alternative solution would be to serve Buellton via long-distance bus on US-101 and provide connecting east-west bus service to Lompoc and the other Santa Ynez Valley communities. This is a similar model to providing connections between Guadalupe and Santa Maria to extend the reach of rail and intercity bus.

In San Luis Obispo County, Route 10 provides service to the urban areas along US-101 (also served by rail) between Santa Maria and the City of San Luis Obispo. In Ventura County, the most developed of the three counties, rail service is directly available in the largest communities: Ventura, Oxnard, Moorpark, and Camarillo (and points east beyond the study area). A network of operators including VCTC, Gold Coast Transit District, Valley Express, and others extend the reach beyond the rail stations to communities such as Ojai, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and more.

## Existing Schedule Connections Between Intercity Buses

Currently, the backbone services identified in this study do not make any intentional scheduled connections. Any opportunity to align a trip through the study area by connecting intercity bus routes is coincidental. The major constraints that limit trips through the study area, from San Luis Obispo to Moorpark, are as follows:

- Route 10 only stops at the Hagerman Softball Complex on one northbound and one southbound trip, while stopping at Santa Maria Transit Center on all other trips. This is the only shared stop between Route 10 and the Clean Air Express in Santa Maria.
- The Clean Air Express only operates southbound in the morning and northbound in the afternoon, with all five trips operating during peak hour.
- The Coastal Express service to Goleta only operates northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon on weekdays. However, service to Santa Barbara serves both directions all day. Clean Air Express operates two trips from Santa Maria to downtown Santa Barbara on weekdays.
- The Coastal Express service primarily serves Ventura, Oxnard, and Camarillo, with a limited number of trips timed to interline with the “East-West Connector” route to Moorpark.

The following figures visualize this constraint as a “stringline” showing the differences in number of trips and directions served through the corridor, despite the geographic connections described in the previous section. It includes the combined Surfliner-Thruway bus trips for context.

### Southbound Intercity Bus Trips (Weekdays)

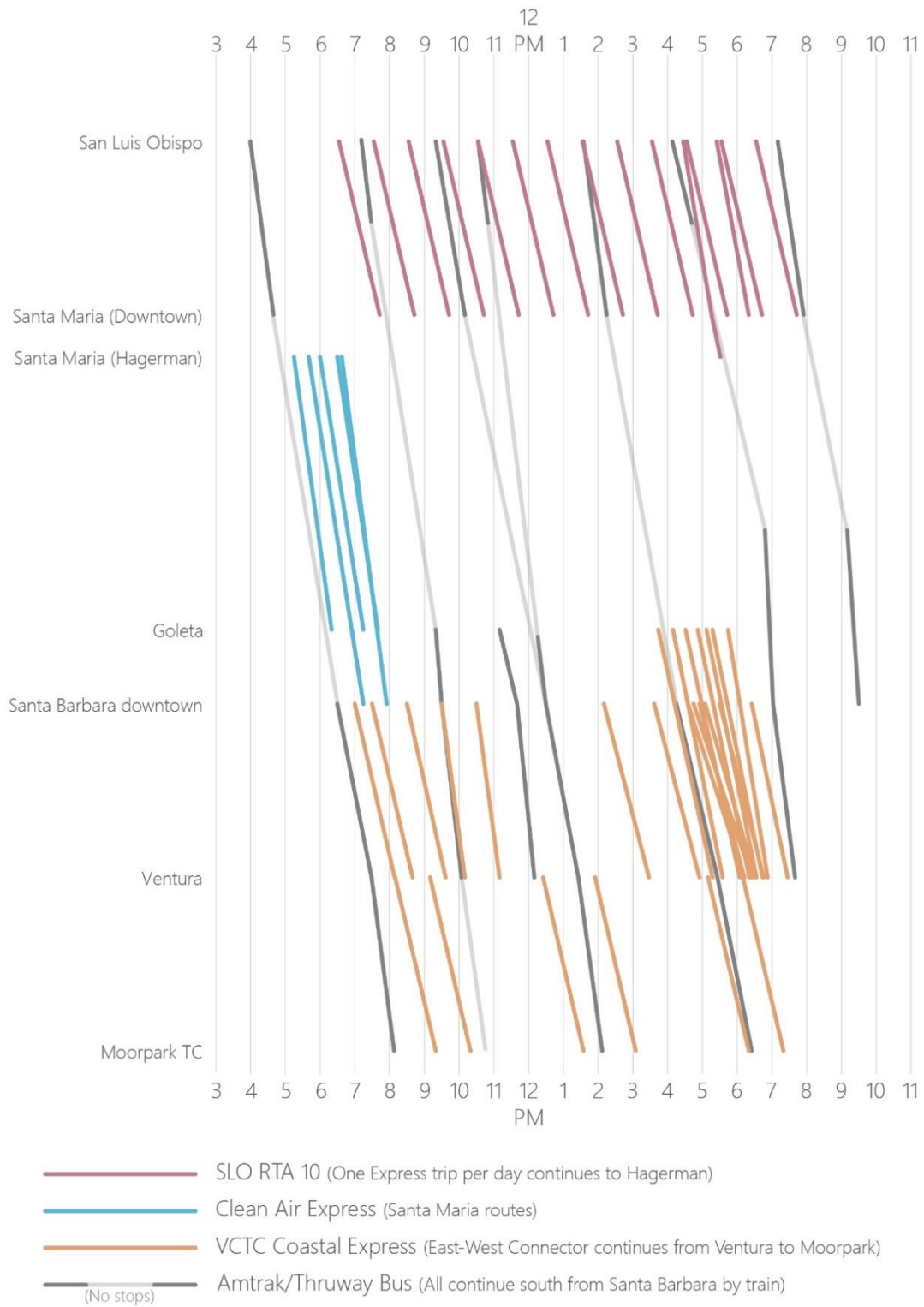


Figure 20 Southbound Intercity Service Stringline

## Southbound Connections

The Figure 20 stringline graph shows the gap in the Central Segment between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara for most of the day. Route 10 provides the most consistent service throughout the day whereas the Clean Air Express and Coastal Express have shorter spans of service and no midday service. This shows that the only opportunity to connect between all three services is in the morning, when Clean Air express runs southbound, if transfer times aligned.

### San Luis Obispo to Santa Maria

Currently, it is not possible for a passenger to connect to all three of these services southbound because there is a missing link in the first segment north of Santa Maria. A southbound trip through the study area would begin by transferring from Route 10 to the Clean Air Express in Santa Maria at the Hagerman stop; however, the only southbound Route 10 trip that serves the Hagerman stop does so in the afternoon at 5:31 PM. Although there is a Route 10 Express bus at the Hagerman stop in the early morning, it is the first stop of a northbound trip departing to San Luis Obispo.

### Santa Maria to Moorpark

It is possible to travel southbound from Santa Maria (Hagerman) to Moorpark in the morning by connecting between Clean Air Express and Coastal Express. There are a few possible places to transfer between the Clean Air Express and the Coastal Express; one possibility is included in Table 8 which continues as far south as Moorpark:

*Table 8 Clean Air Express and Coastal Express Connection Southbound*

| Step                                  | Activity | Agency              | Location                            | Time     |
|---------------------------------------|----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 1                                     | Board    | Clean Air Express   | Hagerman Softball Complex           | 5:40 AM  |
| 2                                     | Alight   | Clean Air Express   | Anacapa at Carrillo                 | 7:11 AM  |
| 3                                     | WAIT     |                     | 25 minutes                          |          |
| 4                                     | Board    | Coastal Express     | Anacapa at Carrillo/De La Guerra St | 7:36 AM  |
| 5                                     | Alight   | Coastal Express     | Ventura Transit Center              | 8:40 AM  |
| 6                                     | WAIT     |                     | 30 minutes                          |          |
| 7                                     | Board    | East-West Connector | Ventura Transit Center              | 8:40 AM  |
| 8                                     | Alight   | East-West Connector | Moorpark Metrolink Station          | 10:20 AM |
| Total Travel Time: 4 hours 40 minutes |          |                     |                                     |          |

A slightly later trip can be made between Santa Maria and Ventura between approximately 6:30 and 9:30 AM. The connection from Clean Air Express to Coastal Express is also just a few minutes shy of an earlier VCTC Coastal Express/East-West Connector trip that would arrive in Moorpark just after 9:10AM; however, the first Clean Air Express arrives in Santa Barbara about 10 minutes too late.

Another possible route on this segment of the study corridor is to connect from the Clean Air Express to the Pacific Surfliner in Goleta. The Clean Air Express stops at Lindmar at La Patera, one block away from the Goleta Pacific Surfliner Station. Using the Pacific Surfliner instead of the Coastal Express allows a passenger to ride through to the edge of the study area in Camarillo and beyond, without transferring. This trip also offers stops at Ventura, Oxnard, and Camarillo. The only possible trip with a transfer time of less than one hour is included in Table 9.

*Table 9 Clean Air Express and Pacific Surfliner Connection Southbound*

| Step                                  | Activity | Agency                  | Location                  | Time    |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| 1                                     | Board    | Clean Air Express       | Hagerman Softball Complex | 5:15 AM |
| 2                                     | Alight   | Clean Air Express       | Lindmar at La Patera      | 6:20 AM |
| 3                                     | WALK     | <i>2 Minutes</i>        |                           |         |
| 4                                     | WAIT     | <i>About 15 Minutes</i> |                           |         |
| 5                                     | Board    | Pacific Surfliner       | Goleta Station            | 6:35 AM |
| 6                                     | Alight   | Pacific Surfliner       | Moorpark Station          | 8:08 AM |
| Total Travel Time: 2 hours 53 minutes |          |                         |                           |         |

### Northbound Connections

Similar constraints impede northbound intercity bus connections through the study area. As shown in the Northbound Intercity Bus stringline graph, morning and mid-day service north from the Santa Barbara/Goleta area to Santa Maria is the major gap to fill. The stringline graph reveals that a single northbound trip through the study area using these services could only be possible in a limited window in the afternoon if transfers aligned both spatially and temporally.

It is possible to travel northbound in the afternoon from Ventura to Santa Maria using the Coastal Express and the Clean Air Express. This trip requires a transfer between the Coastal Express and the Clean Air Express in Santa Barbara. Two trips are possible through this connection, although the first opportunity exceeds a one-hour transfer window and has a 4-hour total trip time.

### Northbound Intercity Bus Trips (Weekdays)

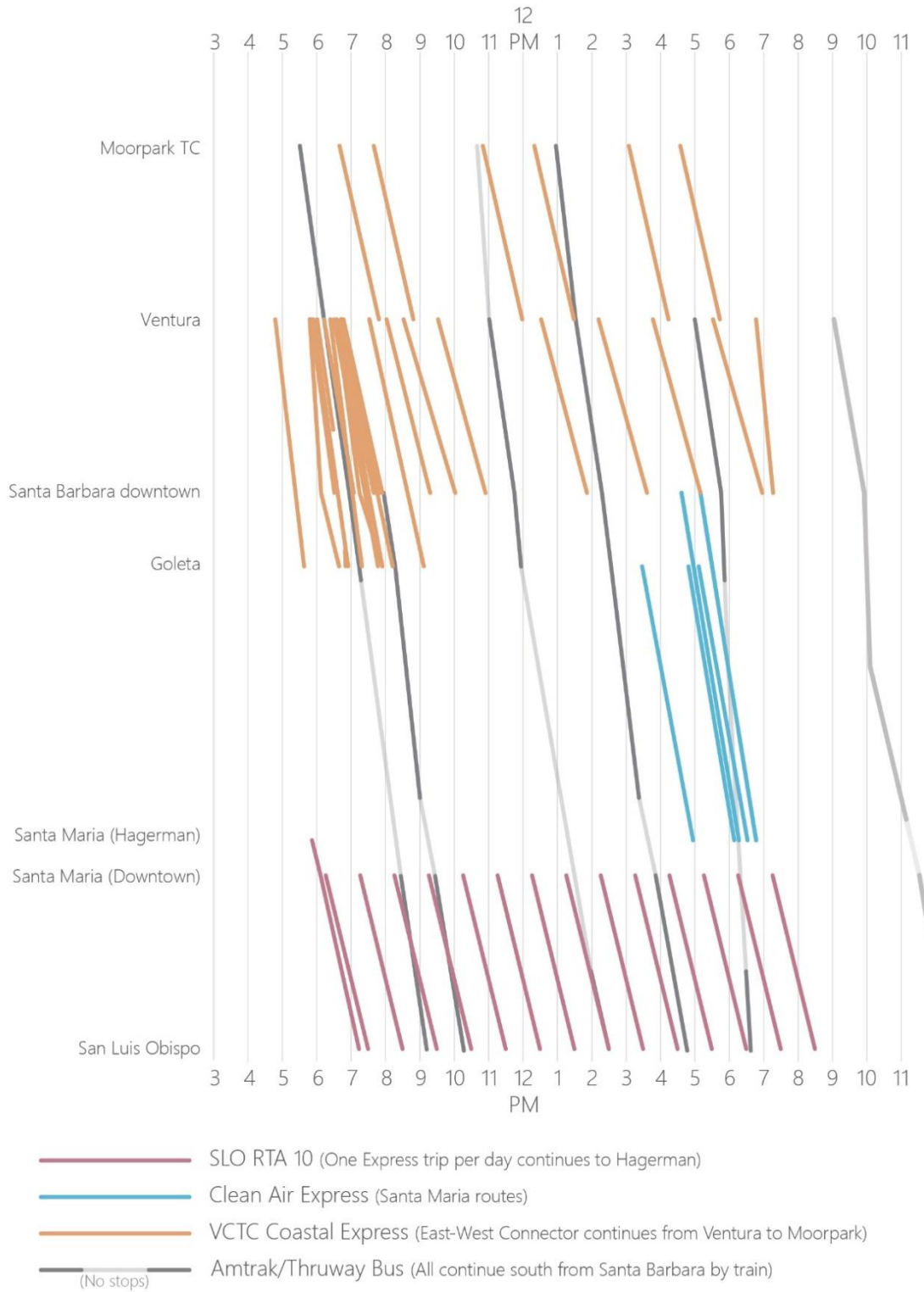


Figure 21 Northbound Intercity Service stringline

The best existing connection is demonstrated in Table 10.

*Table 10 Coastal Express and Clean Air Express Connection Northbound*

| Step                       | Activity | Agency            | Location                              | Time    |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 1                          | Board    | Coastal Express   | Ventura Government Center Hill/Thille | 3:45 PM |
| 2                          | Alight   | Coastal Express   | Santa Barbara St/De La Guerra St      | 5:08 PM |
| 3                          | WAIT     | 5 minutes         |                                       |         |
| 4                          | Board    | Clean Air Express | Santa Barbara St/De La Guerra         | 5:13 PM |
| 5                          | Alight   | Clean Air Express | Hagerman Softball Complex             | 6:45 PM |
| Total Travel Time: 3 hours |          |                   |                                       |         |

The Pacific Surfliner is an alternative to the Coastal Express for travel between Ventura County and Santa Barbara County. As described above, the Pacific Surfliner provides service starting in Camarillo. Using the current schedule there is one connection, shown in Table 11, between the Pacific Surfliner and the Clean Air Express with a transfer time of slightly more than one hour:

*Table 11 Pacific Surfliner and Clean Air Express Connection Northbound*

| Step                                  | Activity | Agency            | Location                  | Time     |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| 1                                     | Board    | Pacific Surfliner | Moorpark Station          | 12:56 PM |
| 2                                     | Alight   | Pacific Surfliner | Goleta Station            | 2:32 PM  |
| 3                                     | WALK     | 2 minutes         |                           |          |
| 4                                     | WAIT     | 65 minutes        |                           |          |
| 5                                     | Board    | Clean Air Express | Lindmar at La Patera      | 3:39 PM  |
| 6                                     | Alight   | Clean Air Express | Hagerman Softball Complex | 4:45 PM  |
| Total Travel Time: 3 hours 49 minutes |          |                   |                           |          |

As discussed, transfers between the Clean Air Express and Route 10 do not align under the current schedules, making a trip through to San Luis Obispo impossible. The only northbound Route 10 trip that serves the Hagerman stop departs in the morning at 5:50 AM. A single Route 10 trip serves the Hagerman stop in the afternoon, but it is the last stop on a southbound trip.

## Other Challenges in Connecting Intercity Services

Aside from temporal or spatial challenges, a number of additional considerations present challenges to implementing an integrated regional transit network. These are largely due to the complex nature of inter-agency coordination and implementation timelines for achieving an outcome that serves the missions of their local communities and are obligated to provide service to their local service area. This section discusses current considerations, while recommendations for addressing these challenges are discussed later in this document.

### Funding and Financing

One of the core challenges of integrating transit intercity transit services are the funding mechanisms, agreements, and sources available to participating agencies. The existing transit systems were largely developed independently by local cities, transit agencies, and regional governments to directly serve people in their communities or commuter markets. These services may have been funded at the local or county level to serve certain purposes such as providing express service for commuters, providing intra-city service, or were funded at the regional and state levels and operated locally as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or create links between cities using existing infrastructure like rail lines.

Each of these agencies have their own operating and capital budget structures based on their local service areas. Agencies do not have discretionary funding available to support new programs such as regional transit integration. Most agencies are eligible or potentially eligible for federal and state transit funding programs, although not all of them currently rely on these resources and the ability to leverage additional funds is limited. With federal and state funding comes specific funding requirements, which may not currently allow for shared resources across a regional transit network. However, eligibility for state and federal funding does potentially increase the pool of funding for future implementation. Finally, local agencies, particularly MTD, face significant capital needs to maintain local services, which are prioritized over regional needs.

The California Statewide Rural Intercity Bus Study Update (2018) identifies near-term funding issues including a decline in 5311(f) sources from Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation and provides recommendations including revised criterion for 5311(f) funding, leveraging existing initiatives and resources, and reorganization of intercity rural regional funding system and organizational structures.

### Fare and Transfer Policies

Clear and understandable fare and transfer policies are an important part of travel given the need for transfers between services in this region. Having consistent fare media in a region can help users transfer between agencies, especially those who may only take transit occasionally or are doing so as part of a recreational trip. Transit agencies in the study area generally have similar fare structures, offering a combination of cash fares, multi-ride or monthly passes, and reduced fares for seniors, students, and youth. Digital fare payment such as Token Transit, e-tickets, and other account-based systems are increasingly being used, as is the case for some of the transit agencies within the study area. However,

access to digital fare media can raise issues about the equity of such systems, as not all members of the community may have access to smartphones or credit cards necessary to utilize these systems. Amtrak began deploying electronic ticketing on routes in 2012.

Several agencies have coordinated fares so that a single ticket can be used to transfer between multiple agencies and between bus and rail. Pacific Surfliner rail tickets can be used to transfer to buses operated by San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority, MTD, Ventura County Transportation Commission, as well as their own Thruway Bus service. The Rail 2 Rail program allows Metrolink Monthly Pass holders to travel on Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains within station pairs of their pass, offering an alternative to Metrolink rail service in the event of a shutdown or to selectively ride to a different destination.

Agreements between local and regional agencies would need to be developed to address transfer policies and funding allocation, as none currently exist since inter-agency bus transfers are generally not allowed. Table 4 in the Existing Conditions chapter shows the transit agencies serving the study area, fare media, fare types, and the rail transfer program options, where available.

## Connecting Services and Retiming

There are currently few opportunities to link existing services together due to route patterns and scheduling. With some adjustment additional opportunities may be feasible. Given the complexities of service planning and scheduling such as route alignment, travel time and reliability, schedule coordination, as well as implementing schedule changes across multiple agencies, coordination among operators is necessary. Implementing a regional network with increased frequency and capacity would require a dedicated operational framework where none currently exists.

In addition, there may also be policy implications for transit agencies to provide service outside of their specific areas. This could raise questions about funding prioritization and liability, again necessitating the need for interagency agreements and a comprehensive regional operational framework.

## Marketing and Brand Awareness

Given the disjointed nature of regional transit in the study area there is no uniform marketing and messaging supporting regional connectivity like branding of buses and signage. Customer awareness of whether they are on the right bus and that the bus is going to their intended destination is a fundamental part of transit planning, though coordination of marketing can be challenging when dealing with multiple agencies. The California Statewide Regional Intercity Bus Study (2018) recommends enhancing communications among rural agencies and Greyhound and Amtrak, noting that schedule changes it takes time to get the word out when changes do occur. SLORTA, VCTC, and Metrolink note in their mid and long range plans the need for enhanced marketing of their services; with Metrolink describing a desire to develop marketing partnerships with member agencies as one of their 10-year Goals and Strategies.

## Local/Regional Governance and Stakeholder Support

Making changes to current institutional structures to implement a revised regional transit framework would be very complex. General administrative oversight of an integrated regional transit network would be needed to address issues and provide overall management and guidance and ensure financial and operational efficiency.

One of the challenges is that transit agencies are currently governed in a variety of ways, including by Joint Powers Authority (JPA), by commission, by Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and as quasi-public organizations or corporations. Each of these governing bodies have authority over an operator either within the agency or through a service provider. These varying organizational structures complicate coordinating a co-managed regional transit network. Recommendations are discussed later in this document, and concepts such a housing a regional transit program where an existing framework is already in place (such as LOSSAN) is addressed. Table 12 below outlines the transit agencies, their type of governance, and their relevant services operating in the study area.

Table 12 Regional Transit Agency Governance Structure and Service

| Type                   | Transit Agency                             | Governing Structure   |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Rail                   | Metrolink                                  | JPA: SCRRRA - LA County, Orange County, Riverside County, San Bernardino County, and Ventura County                               |
|                        | Pacific Surfliner                          | JPA: LOSSAN – San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Diego County, Riverside County |
|                        | Amtrak Coast Starlight                     | Quasi-public corporation  |
| Regional/Intercity Bus | Amtrak Thruway Bus                         | State-funded routes (in California)   |
|                        | San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority | JPA: (San Luis Obispo County jurisdictions)   |
|                        | Clean Air Express                          | JPA (Santa Barbara County jurisdictions)  |
|                        | Ventura County Transportation Commission   | Transportation Commission (Ventura County jurisdictions)  |

# Opportunities for Network Integration

Considering prior studies and the existing planning framework, the existing intercity and subregional transit network, and the travel markets assessment, some opportunities arise for improving regional connectivity through better coordination of intercity bus and rail services. There are past plans, such as the “Lane and a Train” proposal by SBCAG, which fit well with the mid-term goals of the State Rail Plan to expand the frequency of rail service. There are existing intercity bus routes and services which overlap or operate closely enough that long-distance connections could be made with some planning.

However, the fact remains that north of Goleta both travel demand and existing service offerings drop off significantly. As the previous chapter details, there are substantial challenges to expanding through-services beyond Goleta to Santa Maria simply by coordinating existing operations, largely because the Central Segment of the study area is only served in one direction during a limited period and only on weekdays. There are several possibilities for filling this service gap leveraging existing equipment and expanding service but doing so would require additional funding and operating agreements.

Therefore, the opportunities for network integration in the study area are organized into three different approaches. The first section addresses intercity bus concepts on the US-101 corridor, both by expanding long-distance connections using existing service and by adding new services. Expanding existing services involves leveraging existing facilities and agencies and identifying opportunities where relatively minor service adjustments can result in improved connectivity through at least two of the Study Segments and potentially beyond. This can be considered “low hanging fruit” that would create additional long-distance trips parallel to the Pacific Surfliner without disrupting the existing markets being served by these routes.

However, this first approach of connecting existing lines creates a complex experience for passengers who may have to transfer multiple times (with potentially long wait times between legs). The second concept considers initiating long-distance intercity bus services through the creation of new services, filling in any remaining gaps in the medium-term 2027 goals of the State Rail Plan. This section considers conceptual schedules for intercity trips to connect through-running service either from existing trains or new bus service operating through the study area. The goal of the added service concept is to create new trips that achieve the two-hour regional headway goal ideally with a single-seat ride or limited transfers.

The last approach explores the already-identified potential for implementing commuter rail service that would serve the travel market between the two Southern segments of the study area. This examines the potential stations, service design, and infrastructure needs to initiate limited commuter rail service and how this service fits into the regional service context. The SBCAG commuter rail concept is envisioned as a future layer of the state’s medium-to-long-term rail concept.

## Intercity Bus Concepts: Expand Trips from Existing Services

This section describes small changes to service areas and schedules that would result in more connections through the service area, without major disruption to existing service. This approach exclusively considers bus-to-bus connections, because the existing Surfliner rail and Thruway bus services are already designed to complement one another to provide long-distance trips through the study area. When a train operates only as far as Goleta, there is always a continuing Thruway bus, and vice versa for southbound trips originating at Goleta. Therefore, there is no additional benefit in having, for example, the Clean Air Express create a new connection with the Surfliner train because it would be duplicative.

### Additional Connections in Santa Maria

#### Best Opportunities

- Possible opportunity to extend one Express Route 10 trip to Hagerman in each direction by repurposing deadhead
- Extend select Clean Air Express trips to serve Santa Maria Transit Center for connections to SLORTA Route 10

#### Operational Implications:

- +50 Minutes Revenue Hours  
(from assumed deadhead) - SLORTA
- +15 Minutes Revenue Hours – CAE
- +15 Minutes Non-Revenue Deadhead - CAE

Connections between Route 10 and the Clean Air Express would require either some additional trips of Route 10 to extend to the Hagerman stop, or Clean Air Express to extend trips to begin and end at the Transit Center; either approach requires an approximate schedule extension of 15 minutes. Extending the Clean Air Express trips to additionally serve the Transit Center before the Hagerman stop might be operationally simpler since most Route 10 trips are operated as round trips from San Luis Obispo and an extension to the Hagerman stop would add a minimum 30-minute round trip to what is presently a clock-face operation. However, none of the southbound Route 10 trips could make a connection with the southbound Clean Air Express, as the latest departure from Hagerman is at 6:35AM

and the first Route 10 arrival in Santa Maria is not until 7:43AM. SLORTA operates a northbound Route 10 Express departure from the Hagerman stop at 5:50 AM. If that trip is currently deadheading to the Hagerman stop and could become a revenue southbound trip, Route 10 could then make an early morning southbound express connection with the Clean Air Express<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> As with all services in this report, the assumptions are based on 2019 operations. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors, the AM Express Route 10 to Orcutt (Hagerman) is discontinued and may not resume without additional support, per discussions with SLORTA.

Table 13 SLORTA Route 10 and Clean Air Express Connection Southbound—Existing and Proposed

| Stop                   | Existing                            | Conceptual                           | Operator                       |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| San Luis Obispo        | -                                   | 4:55 AM                              | SLORTA 10                      |
| Santa Maria – Hagerman | 5:50 (Northbound to SLO)<br>5:40 AM | 5:40 (returns NB at 5:50)<br>5:40 AM | SLORTA 10<br>Clean Air Express |
| Santa Barbara          | 7:13 AM                             | 7:13 AM                              | Clean Air Express              |

In the northbound direction, the Clean Air Express trips arrive at the Hagerman stop between 4:55 PM and 6:45 PM. Route 10 northbound trips could be extended to serve the Hagerman stop at 6:00 PM and 7:00 PM, in time to allow for transfers from the Clean Air Express, or the Clean Air Express could continue north for a second drop-off location at the Transit Center around 5:10 PM and 7:15 PM. Again, extending the Clean Air Express may be less of an impact to operations since these buses go out of service upon reaching Santa Maria, whereas the Route 10 buses are operating clockface round-trip service. The operational impact to extend Clean Air Express in either direction would be 15 minutes of additional revenue service, plus approximately 15 minutes of non-revenue deadhead back to their current storage location near Orcutt. Table 14 below shows an example of how two Santa Barbara – Santa Maria trips could be extended to the Santa Maria Transit Center to connect with Route 10.

Table 14 SLORTA Route 10 and Clean Air Express Connection Northbound—Existing and Proposed

| Stop                   | Existing |          | Conceptual |          | Operator                       |
|------------------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| Santa Barbara          | -        | 5:08 PM  | -          | 5:08 PM  | Clean Air Express              |
| Goleta                 | 3:26 PM  | -        | 3:26 PM    | -        |                                |
| Santa Maria – Hagerman | 4:55 PM  | 6:45 PM* | 4:55 PM    | 6:45 PM* | Clean Air Express              |
| Santa Maria TC         | -        | -        | 5:10 PM    | 7:00 PM  | Clean Air Express<br>SLORTA 10 |
|                        | 5:14 PM  | 7:14 PM  | 5:14 PM    | 7:14 PM  |                                |
| San Luis Obispo        | 6:28 PM  | 8:28 PM  | 6:28 PM    | 8:28 PM  | SLORTA 10                      |

\* The 5:08PM trip also serves Buellton on its way to Santa Maria

## Additional Connections in Santa Barbara

### Best Opportunity

- Extend select Clean Air Express trips to serve Santa Barbara Transit Center for connections to Coastal Express

#### Operational Implications:

- +15 Minutes Revenue Hours – CAE
- Unknown additional layover/deadhead

With existing service patterns, the best opportunities to transfer between the Clean Air Express and the Coastal Express are in Santa Barbara. The Clean Air Express operates five daily round trips from Santa Maria, but only two of these round trips serve downtown Santa Barbara. Two of the three Goleta-based trips actually terminate at the northwest corner of Santa Barbara at the State and La Cumbre intersection. Extending these Goleta-bound trips to continue express south to the Santa Barbara Transit Center could make new connections to the Coastal Express service continuing south to Ventura.

Although Coastal Express also operates service to Goleta, these trips are primarily one-way towards Goleta in the morning rather than round-trip service. Alternatively, some Coastal Express trips currently terminating in Downtown Santa Barbara could be extended to meet the three Clean Air Express Goleta trips at the Hollister at Patterson stop in Goleta, or the two trips at State and La Cumbre.

In either case, extending the Coastal Express Santa Barbara service could have a greater impact on operations given most, or all, of these trips are assumed to be round-trip service. The extension between the Santa Barbara Transit Center and either State at La Cumbre or Hollister at Patterson is approximately 15 minutes. Because each Clean Air Express trip effectively terminates or originates in the Santa Barbara area, the impact is presumed to be less, adding approximately 15 minutes of revenue service. It does raise more questions about how the Clean Air Express buses layover would be affected given the constraints in the City of Santa Barbara. The Clean Air Express SRTP identifies a need for permanent daytime bus storage in Santa Barbara.

*Table 15 Clean Air Express and VCTC Connection Southbound—Existing and Proposed*

| Stop                   | Existing | Conceptual | Operator          |
|------------------------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| Santa Maria – Hagerman | 5:15 AM  | 5:15 AM    | Clean Air Express |
| Goleta                 | 6:28 AM  | 6:28 AM    | Clean Air Express |
| Santa Barbara (arr)    | -        | 6:43 AM    | Clean Air Express |
| (dep)                  | 7:00 AM  | 7:00 AM    | VCTC              |
| Ventura                | 8:09 AM  | 8:09 AM    | VCTC              |
| Moorpark               | 9:20 AM  | 9:20 AM    | VCTC              |

As described in the previous chapter, the only practical northbound connections from the Coastal Express to the Clean Air Express are already possible in the afternoon, the first with a fairly long wait time between

transfers from a VCTC arrival at 3:38PM to the next Clean Air Express departure at 4:35PM, and the second is timed within a couple of minutes around 5:11PM. There are no benefits from extending a Coastal Express trip to connect with a Clean Air Express route leaving Goleta in the afternoon.

### Southbound Existing Bus Connecting Opportunities

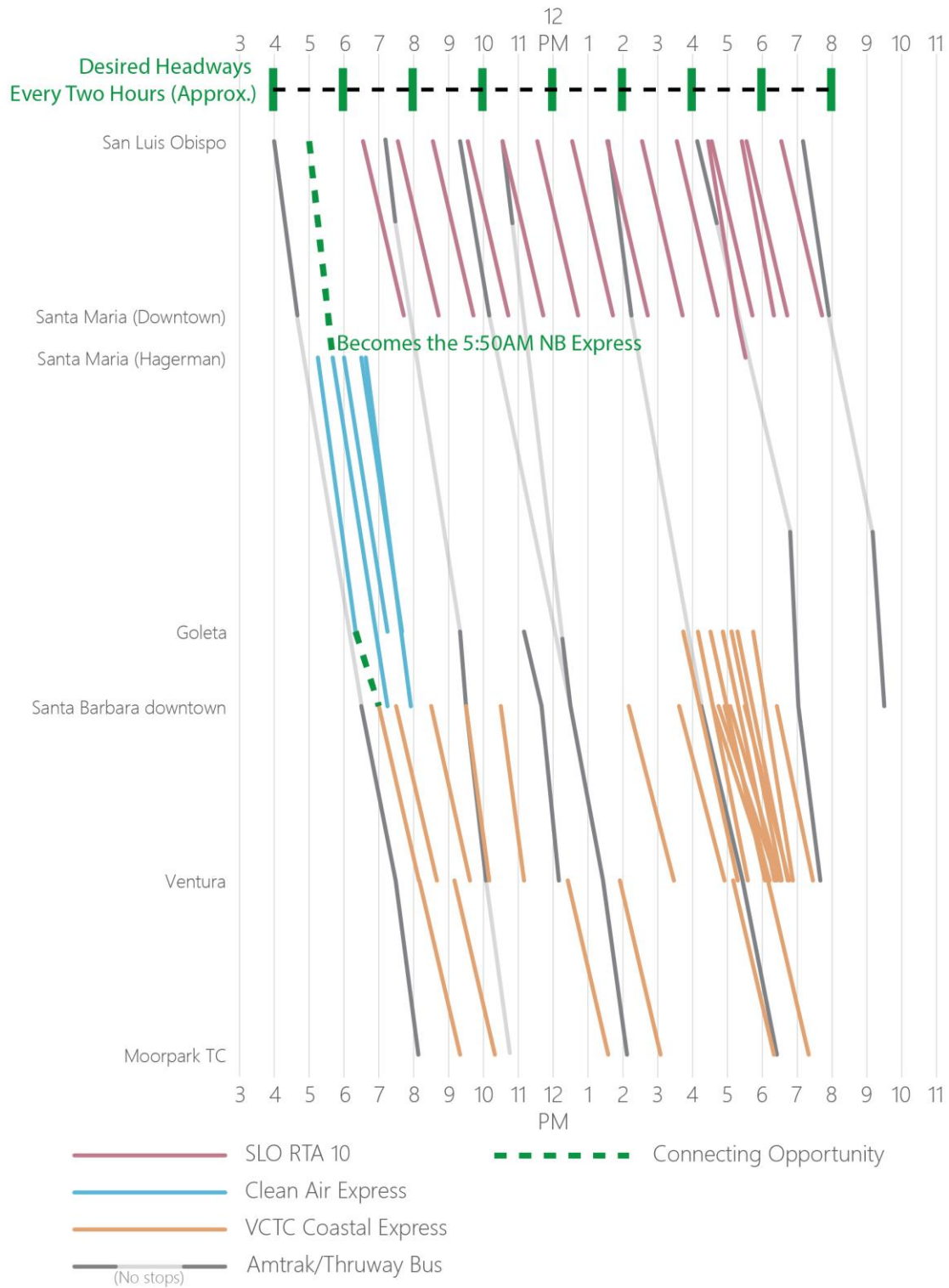


Figure 22 Near-term Expanded Southbound Intercity Bus Opportunities

### Northbound Existing Bus Connecting Opportunities

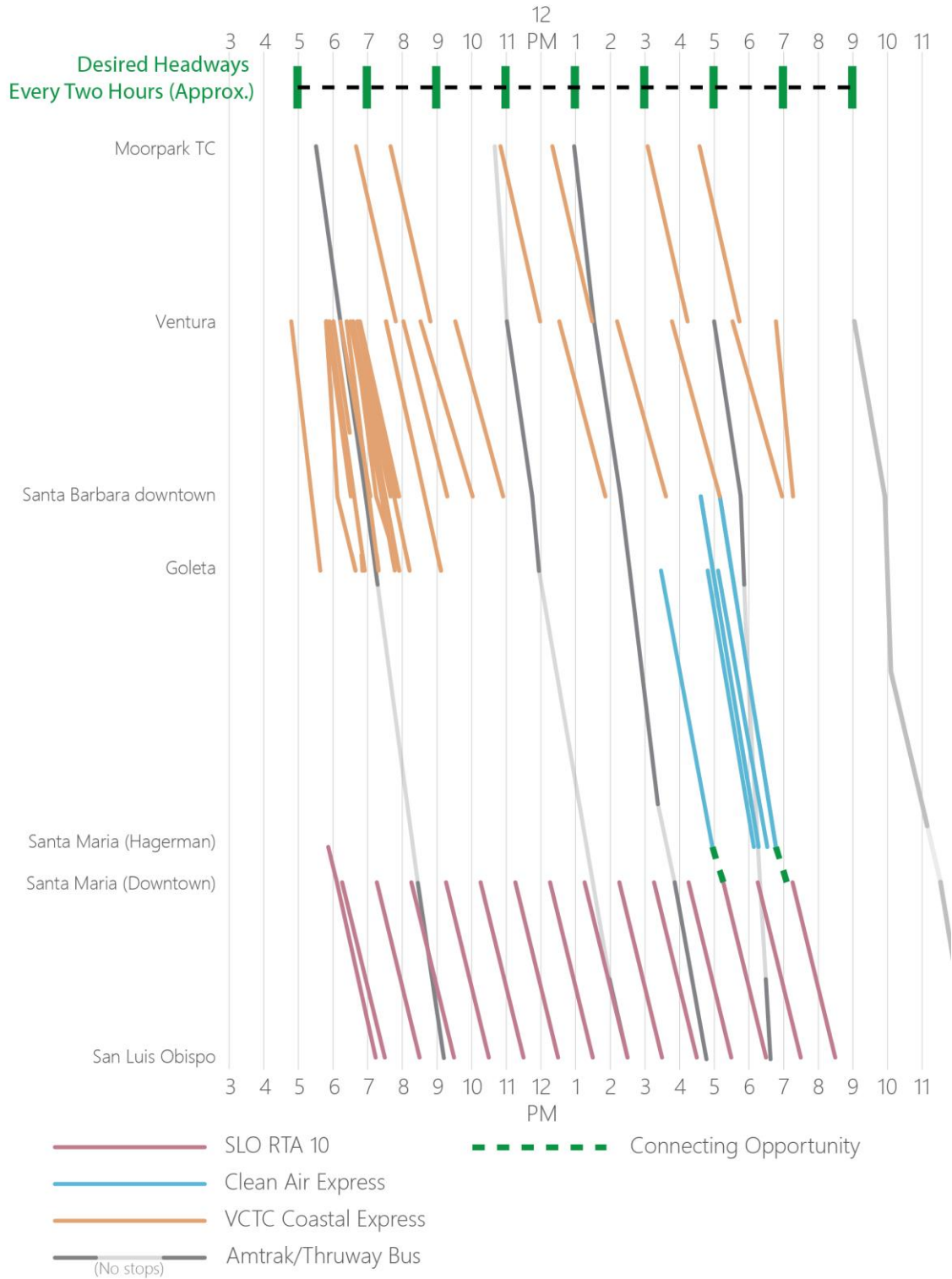


Figure 23 Near-term Expanded Northbound Intercity Bus Opportunities

## Operating Cost

The opportunities to expand regional connections listed above are limited and mostly rely on extensions to the end of Clean Air Express trips to and from Santa Maria, as well as shifting what is presumably deadhead miles to revenue service for SLORTA Route 10 in the early morning. Using a conservative estimate of \$140 per hour operating cost (operating costs vary somewhat between agencies and change over time), these opportunities could result in approximately 45 additional minutes of revenue service for Clean Air Express across three trips (one southbound and two northbound), plus an additional 20 minutes of non-revenue deadhead for Clean Air Express at the end of the northbound trips. For Route 10, because these are repurposing deadhead miles to revenue miles, the additional operating cost is likely negligible and, if successful, could generate revenue compared with the current operation. In total, this represents approximately \$147 per day of additional operating cost, or just over \$38,000 per year of weekday service.

## Near-term Intercity Bus Expansion Opportunities Summary

While limited in scale, there are some seemingly feasible alterations to existing operations of Route 10 and the Santa Maria Clean Air Express that could increase regional connectivity between two Study Segments. In the southbound direction, one new connection from San Luis Obispo through Santa Maria to Santa Barbara (Northern and Central Segments) is made in the early morning, and that aligns with an existing connection from the Clean Air Express to the Coastal Express to Ventura. Although it requires multiple transfers, it creates a through-trip that does not presently exist.

*Table 16 Near-term Intercity Bus Expansion Opportunity: San Luis Obispo to Moorpark*

| Step                                  | Activity | Agency              | Location                            | Time     |
|---------------------------------------|----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 1                                     | Board    | Route 10 (New Trip) | San Luis Obispo Government Center   | 4:55 AM  |
| 2                                     | Transfer | Clean Air Express   | Hagerman Softball Complex           | 5:40 AM  |
| 3                                     | Alight   | Clean Air Express   | Anacapa at Carrillo                 | 7:11 AM  |
| 4                                     | WAIT     | 25 minutes          |                                     |          |
| 5                                     | Board    | Coastal Express     | Anacapa at Carrillo/De La Guerra St | 7:36 AM  |
| 6                                     | Alight   | Coastal Express     | Ventura Transit Center              | 8:40 AM  |
| 7                                     | WAIT     | 30 minutes          |                                     |          |
| 8                                     | Board    | East-West Connector | Ventura Transit Center              | 8:40 AM  |
| 9                                     | Alight   | East-West Connector | Moorpark Metrolink Station          | 10:20 AM |
| Total Travel Time: 5 hours 25 minutes |          |                     |                                     |          |

A second southbound opportunity improves a connection between the Central and Southern Segments, although it excludes any connection from San Luis Obispo. This trip is shorter overall due to more tightly timed transfers, but it is also relatively close in time to an existing Surfliner trip.

*Table 17 Near-term Intercity Bus Expansion Opportunity: Santa Maria to Moorpark*

| Step | Activity | Agency                       | Location                            | Time    |
|------|----------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| 1    | Board    | Clean Air Express            | Hagerman Softball Complex           | 5:15 AM |
| 2    | Alight   | Clean Air Express (Extended) | Anacapa at Carrillo                 | 6:43 AM |
| 3    | WAIT     | 17 minutes                   |                                     |         |
| 4    | Board    | Coastal Express              | Anacapa at Carrillo/De La Guerra St | 7:02 AM |
| 5    | Transfer | East-West Connector          | Ventura Transit Center              | 8:09 AM |
| 6    | Alight   | East-West Connector          | Moorpark Metrolink Station          | 9:20 AM |

Total Travel Time: 4 hours 5 minutes

Northbound opportunities for connections are limited to extending two Clean Air Express trips from Goleta and Santa Barbara, respectively, to the Santa Maria Transit Center to connect with northbound Route 10 trips. This improves connections for the Central and Northern Segments of the study area, and in the case of the latter, creates a trip from Ventura through to San Luis Obispo.

*Table 18 Near-term Intercity Bus Expansion Opportunity: Ventura to San Luis Obispo*

| Step | Activity | Agency            | Location                              | Time               | Time    |        |
|------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------|
| 1    | Board    | Coastal Express   | Ventura Government Center Hill/Thille | -                  | 3:45 PM |        |
| 2    | Alight   | Coastal Express   | Santa Barbara St/De La Guerra St      | -                  | 5:08 PM |        |
| 3    | WAIT     |                   |                                       |                    | -       | 5 min. |
| 4    | Board    | Clean Air Express | Goleta / Santa Barbara                | 3:26 PM            | 5:13 PM |        |
| 5    | Alight   | Clean Air Express | Santa Maria TC (Extended Trip)        | 5:10 PM            | 7:00 PM |        |
| 6    | WAIT     |                   |                                       |                    | 4 min.  |        |
| 7    | Board    | SLORTA Route 10   | Santa Maria TC                        | 5:14 PM            | 7:14 PM |        |
| 8    | Alight   | SLORTA Route 10   | San Luis Obispo Government Center     | 6:28 PM            | 8:28 PM |        |
|      |          |                   |                                       | Total travel time: | 3H 2M   | 4H 42M |

Because these adjustments are relatively minor, no additional facilities are assumed to be required. The result is an incremental improvement to regional connectivity within the study area. In terms of passenger experience, any of these existing and potential trips for someone traveling the length of the region requires multiple transfers between agencies which do not have fare agreements or pass reciprocity. Some of the trips are technically possible but require an extremely tight connection between agencies that do not coordinate operations, raising the risk that the connection could be missed if one bus is late.

## Long-term Intercity Bus Concepts: Improving Connectivity with New Service

The network integration concept explores adding new intercity bus trips to fill the remaining gaps in the 2027 vision of the State Rail Plan, shown below.

Table 19 Proposed Intercity Bus Trips

| Year        | San Luis Obispo  | Santa Maria | Lompoc | Goleta | Santa Barbara         | Ventura   | Oxnard                           | Moorpark | Chatsworth               | Los Angeles |
|-------------|--|-------------|--------|--------|-----------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|-------------|
| <b>2022</b> | Bi-hourly express bus service                              |             |        |        |                       | Bi-hourly rail service, hourly integrated service, at least half-hourly during peak |                                  |          |                          |             |
| <b>2027</b> | 4-hourly rail service                                      |             |        |        | 2-hourly rail service |   |                                  |          | Hourly rail service      |             |
|             | Bi-hourly integrated service                               |             |        |        |                       |   |                                  |          |                          |             |
| <b>2040</b> | Hourly integrated service, at least bi-hourly rail service |             |        |        |                       |   |                                  |          |                          |             |
|             |  |             |        |        | Hourly rail service   |   |                                  |          |                          |             |
|             |  |             |        |        |                       |   | Half-hourly express rail service |          |                          |             |
|             |  |             |        |        |                       |   |                                  |          | Half-hourly rail service |             |

### Trips to Complete CSRP 2027 Vision and Beyond

The first step is to identify gaps in the regional two-hour headway goal that the Rail Plan identifies. These gaps would not be precisely on a two-hour window, given that travel times between Pacific Surfliner and new intercity bus trips will vary along the way. In other words, if a train and bus both departed San Luis Obispo southbound at the same time, they would not reach Goleta, Santa Barbara, and points south at the same time. Also, because the existing schedule does not fall neatly into even time increments, precisely defining a “gap” is difficult. Figure 24 and Figure 25 below illustrate the clearest gaps in service with no through-service for more than two hours from the southbound departures at San Luis Obispo and the northbound departures at Moorpark, respectively.

As the stringline graphs show, while these gaps may overlap with one or two existing bus routes along the way, there are three periods in each direction with effectively no through-service across the study area for greater than two hours. This represents an opportunity to create three new round-trip intercity bus runs that would provide (ideally) a single-seat ride through the study area and meet the minimum goal of “bi-hourly integrated service” between San Luis Obispo and Ventura/Moorpark when slotted in between existing Surfliner-Thruway trips.



Figure 24 New Southbound Intercity Bus Opportunities

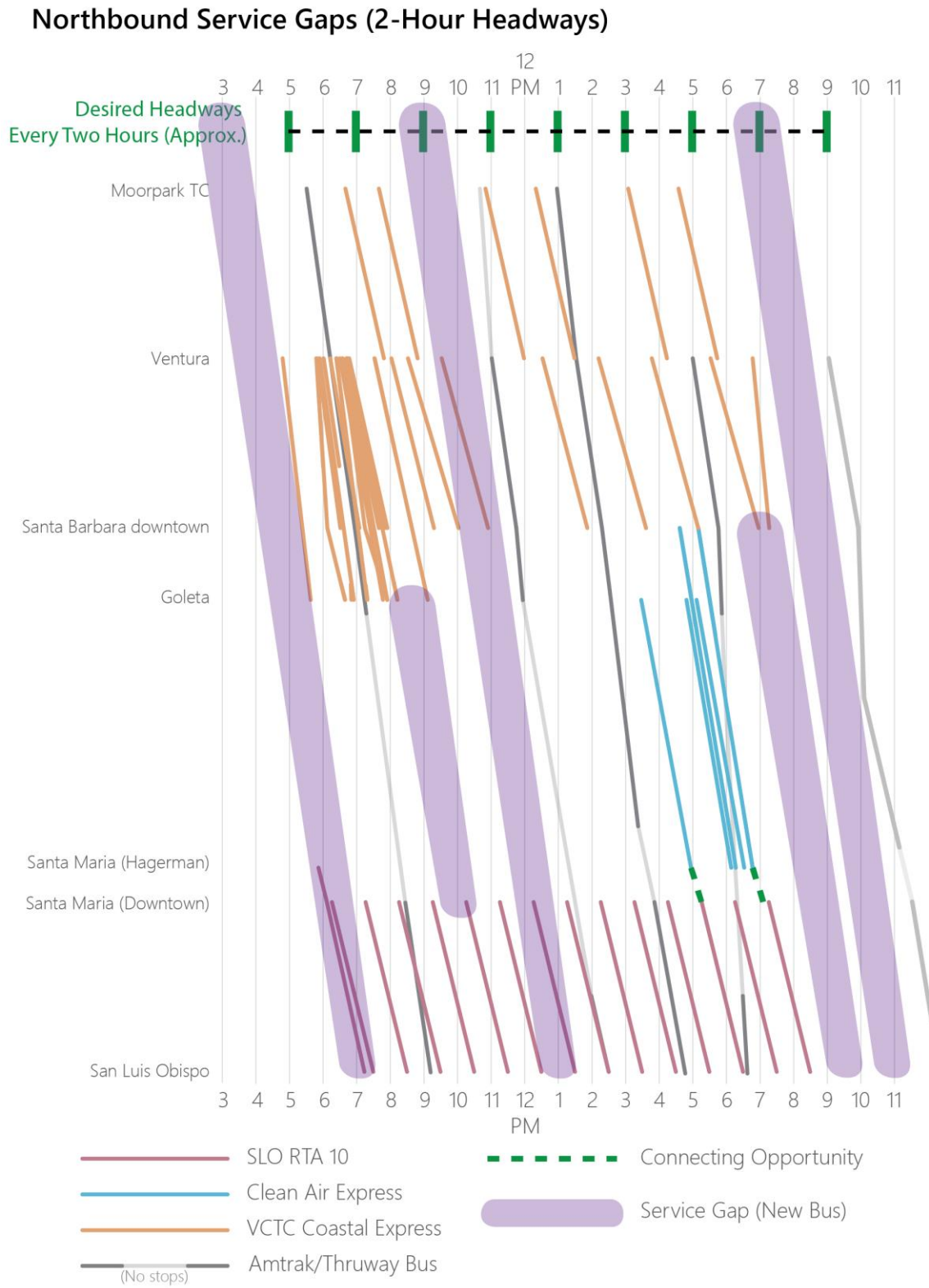


Figure 25 New Northbound Intercity Bus Opportunities

There are two additional opportunities in each direction when an extension of the expanded existing service could further enhance the service through the region by bridging the Central Segment service gap. In the southbound direction, the first would extend service from the Route 10 in Santa Maria at 8:45 AM to connect with a Thruway Bus in Goleta at UCSB at 11:10AM. As with all opportunities identified in this study, this is not envisioned specifically to be an extension of any one service. It could be a run-through trip of Route 10 or an earlier Thruway Bus, or a wholly new trip. The second southbound gap is in the afternoon and would make a similar bridge from Route 10 through the Central Segment to connect with the proposed commuter rail in Goleta around 5:15PM.

In the northbound direction a Central Segment gap can be filled in the morning with service continuing north from the Goleta commuter rail at 8:30AM to meet the 10:15AM Route 10 continuing to San Luis Obispo. In the evening there is a much longer gap between services. Although travel demand is likely much lower at this time, an extension of the northbound Coastal Express arriving in Santa Barbara just before 7PM could provide continuing service north through the study area to San Luis Obispo. There are no northbound services beyond this point to connect with.

## Operations

Altogether this would create five new round trips with three traversing the entire study area and two primarily bridging the Central Segment connecting existing and planned trips. At this level, precise scheduling, slotting of trips, and interlining of routes is impractical. However, the following are considerations for how these trips could be operated. Some combination of these options is likely in the short-term. The following chapter addresses the question of administrative oversight of these new and interlined services.

- **Create and/or extend new Thruway trips:** Thruway bus extends service along a rail corridor to complete connections when a train would not otherwise be able to operate. In the study area, this extends service beyond Goleta to San Luis Obispo where historic demand and operating costs are better matched for a bus trip. Prior to SB742, Thruway trips in California were required to interline with continuing rail service. Now, there is an opportunity for exclusively Thruway-operated trips.
- **New trips utilizing deadheading or layover buses:** Particularly for the Clean Air Express and some VCTC service, some buses lay over for most of the day between peak periods. Some peak VCTC buses may be deadheading from Goleta or Santa Barbara back to their garage and returning for afternoon service. With a more detailed look at the service needs, combined fleet availability between operators, and prioritizing the existing blocking, there could be opportunities to utilize some buses in revenue service to operate portions or entire trips.
- **Extend existing intercity lines to provide continuing service:** In some cases, it may make the most sense to develop operating agreements with the existing providers to extend service in the same direction, particularly across the Central Segment gap. This would reduce transfers for customers from as many as four to possibly only one, depending on the arrangement. It would put the onus on the overall coordinating body to support individual agencies to ensure their existing service design can still be met through re-blocking.

- Operate new run-through trips using new electric buses:** An interesting opportunity to improve not only the availability of service and meet the State goals for network integration, but also support the State's emissions goals would be to operate all run-through bus service in the study area using electric buses. At approximately 170 miles one-way, the trip is within the operating range of the current generation of battery electric buses. Additionally, SLORTA is currently constructing a new bus maintenance facility with future capacity to charge multiple electric buses. Other agencies throughout the study area will likely be phasing in electric bus charging stations as part of the California Innovative Clean Transit rule. With infrastructure upgrades in place, the long-distance express service through the study area could be operated with electric coaches that would charge during a layover at either end before returning in the opposite direction.
- Potential pilot service:** Given the long distance and travel time between San Luis Obispo and Camarillo, one potential option for an initial service plan would be for SLORTA and VCTC to each operate two round trips that would originate from their respective service areas. VCTC currently contracts for service, but in order to minimize impacts and disruption of local service SLORTA could contract with a private service provider to allow near term start up and operational flexibility.

Table 20 shows the assumed revenue service time based on express service between these stops with some schedule buffer as traffic at different times of the day will affect these assumptions (particularly in the Southern Segment). New services are assumed to serve the Santa Maria Transit Center, the Buellton park & ride, the Santa Barbara MTD Transit Center, the Ventura Transit Center, and the Moorpark train station. If these routes were modified to serve intermediate stops as some of the existing routes do, revenue hours would increase.

*Table 20 New Intercity Bus Concept Annual Additional Revenue Service Hours*

| Route Segment                 | Revenue Time (one way) | Daily (three full round trips + two partial extensions) | Annual Revenue Hours (weekdays only) |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| San Luis Obispo - Santa Maria | 0:40                   | 4:40  | 1,213                                |
| Santa Maria - Buellton        | 0:30                   | 5:00  | 1,300                                |
| Buellton - Santa Barbara      | 0:40                   | 4:40  | 1,213                                |
| Santa Barbara - Ventura       | 0:50                   | 5:00  | 1,300                                |
| Ventura - Moorpark            | 0:40                   | 4:00  | 1,040                                |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>3:20</b>            | <b>23:20</b>  | <b>6,067</b>                         |

### Operating Cost

Based on a conservative assumption of \$140 per hour for operation, and an assumption of 20% additional non-revenue hours, the additional intercity bus services could cost roughly \$1.3 million annually.

Conservative estimates for fare revenue, using the range of long-distance fares from the *Existing Intercity Transit Service* chapter, could reduce the net operating cost of this conceptual service to \$600,000 - \$900,000 annually.

## Passenger Facilities

Generally, the service expansions explored in this section can take advantage of existing or planned facilities for serving passengers.

- **San Luis Obispo:** Trips could serve the existing hub on Osos Street at Government Center, which provides direct connections with other routes and maintains consistency with Route 10. Trips could instead serve the train station, although there is not a clear benefit in doing so since these buses are operating in place of a train rather than connecting with one, and the train station itself is not better located for first/last mile connections throughout the community.
- **Santa Maria:** Trips could serve the Santa Maria Transit Center located in downtown Santa Maria, or major commercial developments close to US 101. The Transit Center has 16 bus bays and connects with many other local routes serving the area. The present Amtrak Thruway Bus serves a curbside stop just off US-101 on Nicholson Avenue just south of Main Street. This stop requires a short walking connection to any other bus route and has no passenger amenities.
- **Buellton:** Trips could serve the Buellton Park & Ride on Avenue of the Flags, just north of the Santa Rosa Road exit. The Park & Ride features a passenger waiting area with shelters and benches. This stop is served by the Clean Air Express and is a short walk to connect with the Santa Ynez Valley Express bus which provides connecting east-west service between Buellton, Solvang, and Santa Ynez.
- **Santa Barbara:** Santa Barbara MTD operates a transit center on Chapala Street, about a mile north and on the opposite side of the US-101 freeway from the train station. The transit center would be a logical choice for intercity bus service. However, the existing transit center is constrained with stops distributed along Chapala Street in order to connect numerous local MTD routes as well as VCTC Coastal Express buses. There are multiple nearby suitable bus stops available as walkable alternatives.
- **Ventura:** Trips could serve the existing Transit Center on Telegraph Road or downtown Ventura to reduce travel times. VCTC Coastal Express buses and other local routes connect at the transit center, which has six sawtooth bays as well as on-street space nearby for layovers. Further coordination is needed with VCTC to confirm that there is adequate capacity for the additional trips envisioned here.
- **Moorpark:** Trips would serve the Moorpark Train Station bus stop on High Street, which is currently a connecting point for VCTC services. Because most Metrolink trains originate or terminate at this station, it is the best choice for connecting regional and inter-regional services. The current facility has only basic curbside loading for buses, and improvements would benefit the passenger experience. There are no known bus improvements planned at this site.

## Operations, Support and Maintenance Facilities

Given the level of additional service anticipated, and that both the near-term expanded service and long-term new service could likely be operated using existing fleet vehicles and staff, the need for additional maintenance and support facilities expressly for a future “Network Integration” system is presumed to be minimal. However, there are some identified facility needs or plans that should be considered.

- **Santa Maria Storage:** Clean Air Express has identified a need for an improved storage facility in the Santa Maria area. There are presently five buses stored on an unsecured County-owned parcel in Santa Maria.
- **Southern Segment Maintenance:** VCTC staff have identified the need for an additional or replacement intercity bus maintenance facility in Ventura County.
- **Central Segment Maintenance:** SBCAG recently purchased a transit operations and maintenance facility in Goleta, which could support added intercity bus service.
- **North Segment Maintenance and Layover:** SLORTA is presently constructing a new bus maintenance facility which includes preparations for future electric charging capacity.

## Intercity Rail Concepts

This section examines the feasibility and potential structure of a commuter rail system connecting West Ventura County to South Santa Barbara County. It begins with a description of the existing rail and transit conditions in the corridor, followed by a conceptual overview of a commuter rail system that would serve residents of Ventura, Oxnard, and Camarillo who commute to employment locations in Santa Barbara and Goleta, and concludes with recommended next steps to move towards implementing the service, which is central to SBCAG's "Lane and a Train" strategy to address traffic congestion in the US-101 corridor between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.

This exploration of a commuter rail concept is consistent with SBCAG's long-term vision for travel demand management in south Santa Barbara County. The concept would be considered an additional layer or component within the State's larger rail plan, which continues to evolve since the 2018 Plan was published. The State, LOSSAN, and other passenger rail stakeholders currently envision a medium-term system design with regional "pulse" scheduling in which trains depart from their origins at either end of a corridor on regular intervals throughout the day. The pulse system is designed to increase reliability of service and frequency including planned train meets to optimize the use of single and double-track sections, as well as defining specific windows for freight operations to further minimize sources of passenger rail delay.

### Existing/Planned Rail and Transit Conditions

Ventura and Santa Barbara counties are connected by a single highway connection, US-101, and a single rail line, the Santa Barbara Subdivision rail corridor owned by Union Pacific Railroad (UP).

#### Santa Barbara Subdivision Overview

The Santa Barbara Subdivision was constructed in 1900 by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company as part of a larger railroad between Burbank, California, and the San Francisco Bay Area, roughly following the Pacific Coast. The Santa Barbara Subdivision is primarily single-track, with limited sidings in the study area to allow for trains to pass, as shown in Figure 26. There are connections to Port Hueneme in Oxnard and to the Metrolink station in East Ventura (which allows Metrolink to store three trains off the main line overnight and reverse service). The rail corridor between Moorpark and San Jose is owned by Union Pacific and sees limited freight rail service. Freight trains are typically local, empty bare table, and empty autorack trains.

Goleta to Camarillo  
LOSSAN Corridor  
Existing and Planned  
Rail Improvements

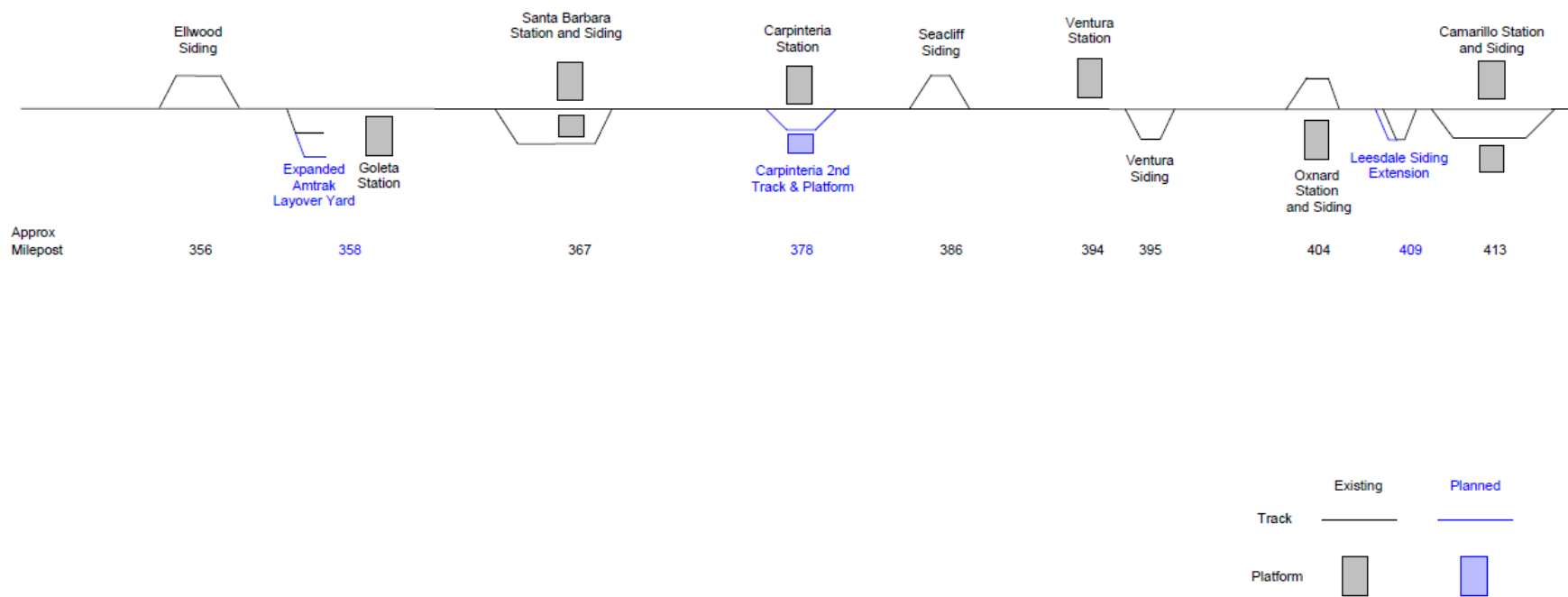


Figure 26 Santa Barbara Subdivision Layout

A limited number of rail capacity-expansion infrastructure projects are currently planned in the corridor. A new siding and second platform at Carpinteria is partially funded through the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program, although most of the funding for this project has been transferred to bridge replacements in North Santa Barbara County. The Carpinteria capacity expansion projects are anticipated for completion after 2030.

### *Rail Stations and Planned Improvements*

The rail corridor in the study area is served by three passenger rail services: the fully state-funded Pacific Surfliner intercity service, long distance Amtrak Coast Starlight service, and the Metrolink Ventura County Line commuter rail service. The stations served by these routes are shown in Figure 27. The following improvements planned for stations in the corridor include:

- **Goleta – Goleta Train Depot Project** – Construction of a new train station next to the existing passenger platform in Goleta is scheduled to begin in 2022. The new station will include expanded parking capacity and sheltered waiting areas.
- **Carpinteria – Second Track/Platform** – A single-track platform with plans to construct a second 700-foot platform and approximately 1.2 miles of double track due to track geometry. The additional 2nd platform will allow for additional operational flexibility in the area, with northbound and southbound trains able to serve the station simultaneously. A detailed overview of the platform is displayed below in Figure 28.
- **Camarillo –Pedestrian Undercrossing**– While there are currently two platforms at the Camarillo station, moving between the grade separated platforms requires passengers to travel a lengthy pedestrian bridge, which does not allow sufficient time to board a train on the opposite platform. A pedestrian undercrossing is envisioned to allow for meets between opposing trains at the station as originally designed and improve corridor capacity and operational flexibility.



Figure 27 Existing Station Locations Map

Source: Fehr & Peers, STV



Figure 28 Carpinteria - Second Track/Platform - Detail

Source: Fehr & Peers, STV

### Rail Operations

Key aspects of these three rail services in the study area are described below. As with all other content in this report, these plans were developed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and no assessment is made for whether these plans may change as a result.

- **Pacific Surfliner** – Fully state-funded intercity train service between San Luis Obispo and San Diego. There are five roundtrips a day (ten trains total) in the study area, with three of those terminating at Goleta and two serving San Luis Obispo. The state’s ultimate goal is to operate trains every two hours to Goleta, and every four hours to San Luis Obispo.
- **Coast Starlight** – Amtrak long distance service operating between Seattle and Los Angeles. One roundtrip operates daily, with northbound trains going through the study area around noon and southbound trains around 6 PM.
- **Metrolink** – A commuter rail system serving Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. Three Ventura County Line roundtrips operate weekdays from East Ventura to downtown Los Angeles, with trains leaving East Ventura in the morning and returning in the evening.

### Maintenance Facilities

- **Amtrak Goleta Maintenance Facility** – Pacific Surfliner trains are currently serviced and stored at the Goleta Maintenance Facility adjacent to the Goleta station. There are current plans to expand and improve this facility in three phases, with only Phase 1 currently funded:
  - Phase 1: Expand storage from one to two trainsets by extending the existing storage track west of the station
  - Phase 2: Connect the layover tracks with a nearby spur and construct a platform to allow trains terminating at Goleta reverse without fouling the main line
  - Phase 3: Further expansion to allow for a third train to layover

## Definition of Rail Alternative

Many of the workers at job centers in Santa Barbara and Goleta/UCSB live in Ventura County (mainly Ventura, Oxnard, and Camarillo), and commute via US-101, the only major vehicular connection between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. To address congestion on US-101 between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, SBCAG adopted the *101 in Motion* "Lane and a Train" plan, which calls for constructing an HOV lane between Carpinteria and Santa Barbara and developing a commuter rail service along the Santa Barbara Subdivision between Camarillo and Goleta. Key components of a commuter rail service such as alignment, stations, operations, maintenance facilities, and vehicles are described in the following section.

### Alignment

New commuter rail service would follow the existing rail corridor for approximately 56 miles between Camarillo and Goleta. While further operations modeling is needed to verify a more exact operating scheme, it is expected that trains would be able to operate efficiently without a need for new sidings or other alignment features (apart from maintenance facilities described in the Support and Maintenance Facilities section). The Santa Barbara Subdivision is currently owned, operated, and maintained by the UPRR. New commuter rail service would require an agreement with the UPRR to cover the maintenance and operations of the alignment, or the public purchase of the rail corridor.

### Stations

Within the Camarillo to Goleta corridor, six stations already exist along the Santa Barbara Subdivision: Goleta, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Ventura, Oxnard, and Camarillo.

While these six existing stations provide a strong foundation for regional rail service, they would be supplemented by three new stations for the proposed commuter rail project to better serve job centers in Santa Barbara County and residential areas in Ventura County. These three new stations are described in the following section and shown in Figure 29 and Figure 30. Maintenance and operations agreements would need to be developed with local jurisdictions for any new stations in the corridor.

Goleta to Camarillo  
LOSSAN Corridor  
Proposed Rail  
Improvements

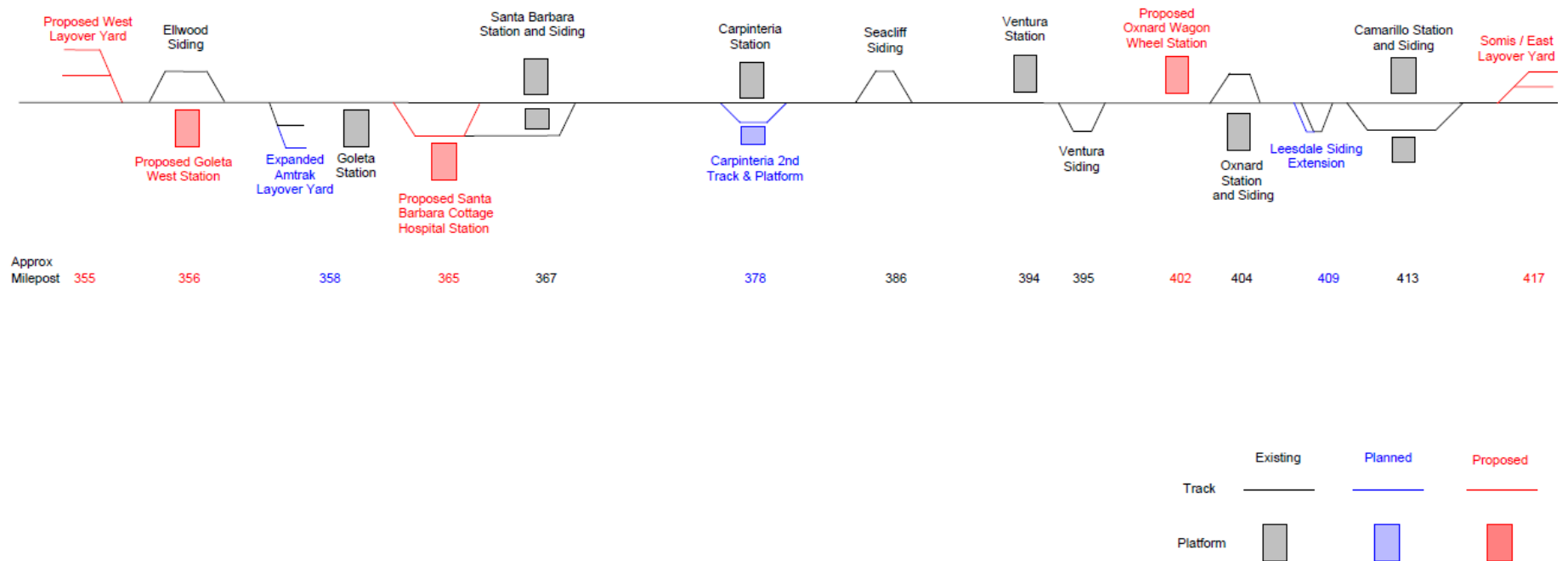


Figure 29 Proposed LOSSAN Corridor Schematic

Source: STV



Figure 30 Proposed Station Locations

Source: Fehr & Peers, STV

## Goleta West Station

The current Goleta Pacific Surfliner station is located at La Patera Lane to the north of Santa Barbara Airport in an industrial area. A new (additional) Goleta West station just over one mile to the west at Castilian Drive would allow for direct, walkable access to the large business park in the area, a major employment center for the region. The proposed station would include a side platform on the south side of the corridor, minimal amenities, and no parking or bus terminals. The proposed station is described in detail in the 2012 Goleta Business Park Commuter Rail Station Study by SBCAG. Figure 31 displays the location of the proposed station. Figure 32 displays the proposed station area in greater detail.



*Figure 31 Proposed Goleta West Station*

Source: STV



Figure 32 Goleta West Station - Detail

Source: STV

These images display the current and future site of the proposed Goleta West platform. In addition to the platform illustrated, ADA-compliant access would connect the platform to the adjacent parking lot, which includes a Flood Control easement that enables access to Castilian Drive.

*Figure 33 Existing and Conceptual Goleta West Platform*



*Conceptual*



Source: STV

## Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital

In order to directly serve the large employment base associated with Cottage Hospital and the surrounding medical complex, it would be beneficial to construct a passenger platform adjacent to the existing freeway pedestrian overpass so that commuters could walk from the commuter rail stop to their employment location. The Cottage Hospital Area is served by intercity/commuter buses such as the Clean Air Express and the Coastal Express; however, a rail connection would provide improved service to the area. An existing control point at the proposed Cottage Hospital platform, could be moved to allow for optimal platform location. Figure 34 shows an overview of the station area.

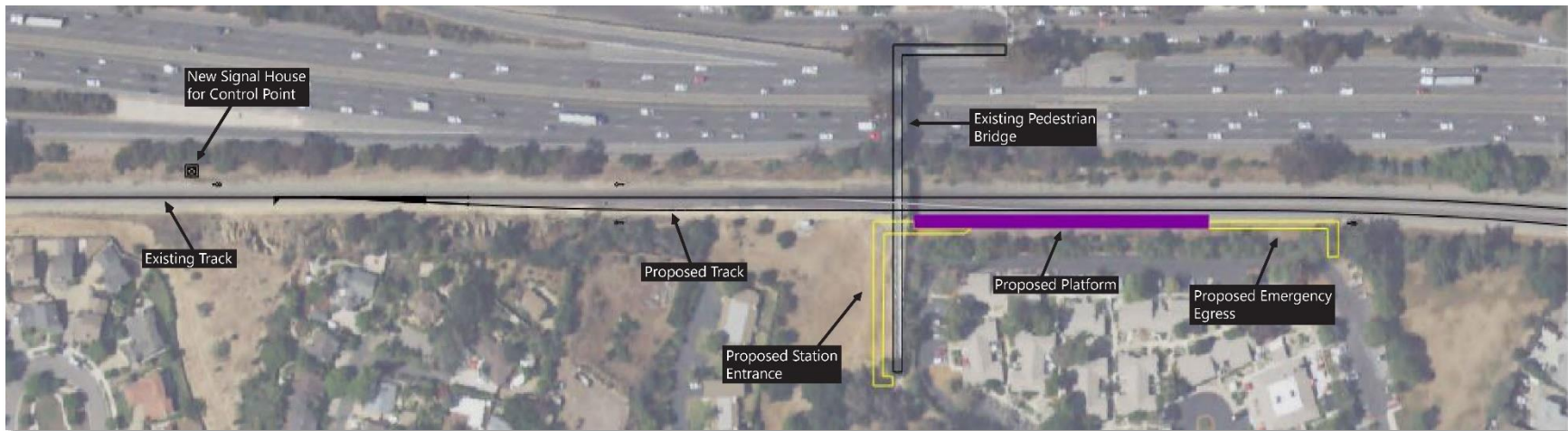
A new passenger platform on the south side of the second main line would allow commuters to use the existing pedestrian US-101 overpass to access the health complex. To allow commuter trains to use both platforms at the Santa Barbara station while maintaining the ability to access the Cottage Hospital, a crossover could also be added east of the new passenger platform. Figure 35 displays the platform, and Figure 36 displays the additional crossover.



Figure 34 Proposed Cottage Hospital Station

Source: STV

Figure 35 Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital Station – Detail



Source: STV

Figure 36 Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital Station – Crossover at Micheltorena (east of station) - Detail



Source: STV

The images below show a side-by-side of the existing and future site of the proposed station entrance (Figure 37) and a side-by-side of the existing and future site of the proposed platform for the Cottage Hospital station (Figure 38).

*Figure 37 Existing and Conceptual Cottage Hospital Station Access*



Source: STV \*Top photo = existing; bottom photo = conceptual

Figure 38 Existing and Proposed Cottage Hospital Station



Source: STV \*Left photo = existing; right photo = conceptual

## Oxnard Wagon Wheel

There is currently a 10-mile gap between the Ventura and Oxnard stations, with significant population in this area, including new developments at Wagon Wheel and River Park near the Oxnard Boulevard / US-101 interchange. A new station near Wagon Wheel Road / Oxnard Boulevard would provide service to these new developments as well as large neighborhoods in northwestern Oxnard and eastern Ventura. The station would consist of a new side platform on the north side of the tracks connecting to Spur Drive, minimal amenities, and no parking. There are local bus connections with Gold Coast Transit and the Coastal Express and a small park and ride facility on Spur Drive just a short walk from the proposed platform.

Figure 39 shows an overview of the station including the proposed platform, and existing bus stops. An overview of the station in greater detail is displayed in Figure 40.



*Figure 39 Oxnard Wagon Wheel Proposed Station Area*

*Source: STV*



*Figure 40 Oxnard Wagon Wheel Station – Detail*

Source: STV

The images below display the north view of the existing and future site of the proposed Wagon Wheel station platform.

*Figure 41 Existing and Proposed Wagon Wheel Station Platform*



*Conceptual*

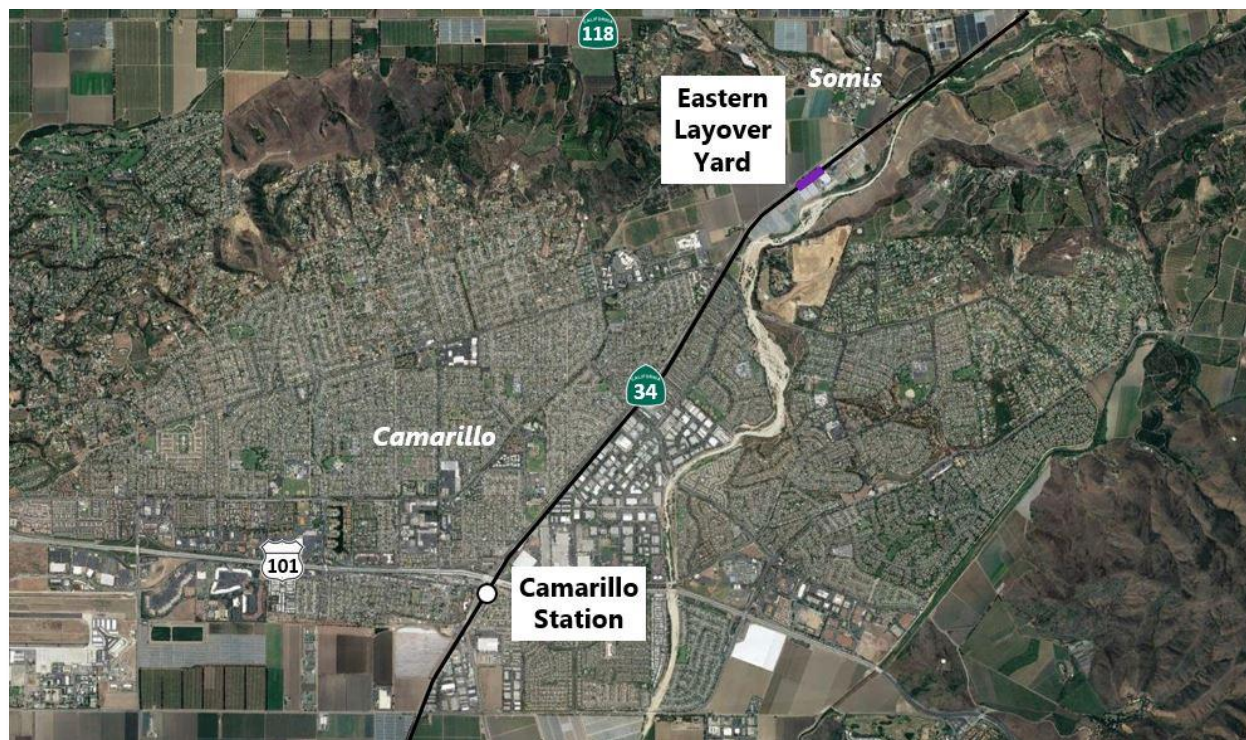


Source: STV

### Support and Maintenance Facilities

There is a need for two support/maintenance facilities to support commuter rail service between Goleta and Camarillo. Potential designs of these two facilities are described in the following sections.

#### Somis/Camarillo Eastern Layover Yard



*Figure 42 Eastern Layover Yard*

*Source: STV*

Figure 42 shows a potential location for an eastern maintenance facility approximately five miles northeast of Camarillo. A stub-end configuration, similar to the East Ventura and Moorpark storage facilities is recommended. This facility would be used for nightly storage of the trainsets, with other activities and features described in the Somis/Camarillo Eastern Layover Yard section of the Appendix.

The train placement is spaced a bit further from the clear points if Non-Powered Control Units (NPCU) are used for the service. Figure 43 displays a locomotive and 3 car trains in the teal shading. There is around 125' of padding to account for the addition of two NPCUs per track. The layout displayed in Figure 43 presents the ability to potentially add a fourth car in the future. The option to add an additional car may allow the future train service to meet the demand of a growing ridership.

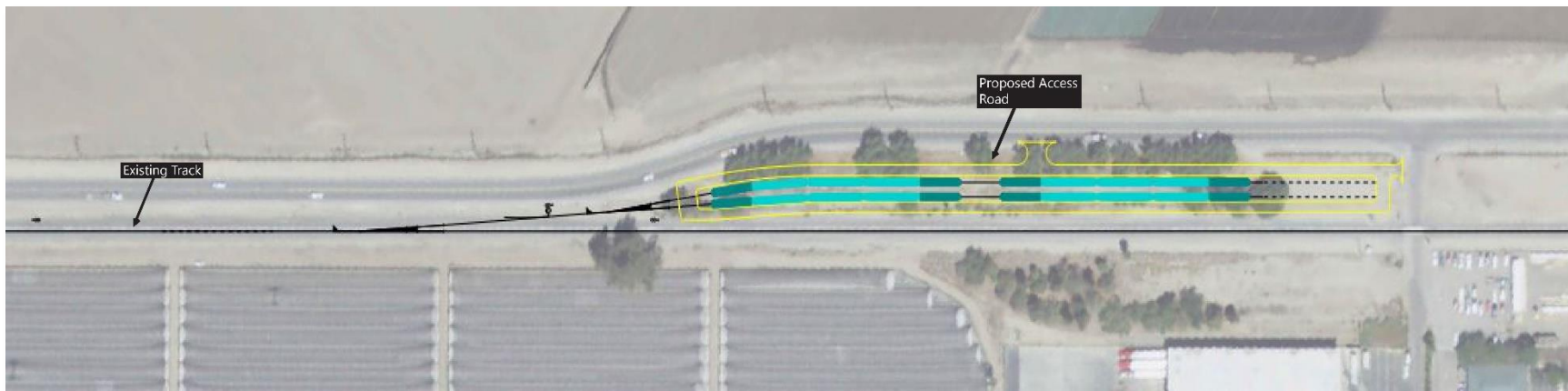


Figure 43 Eastern Layover Yard – Detail (stored trains in teal)

Source: STV

## Goleta West/Elwood Western Layover Yard



*Figure 44 Western Layover Yard*

Source: STV

Figure 44 shows the Western Layover yard, proposed for an undeveloped section of the rail right of way approximately 8,000' west of the Goleta West station near Elwood as shown above. It is designed for four trains to lay over during the day and would include service and inspection facilities along with truck-dispensed fueling. There is sufficient undeveloped land to expand the facility for use by the operator of the Pacific Surfliner service to serve as a maintenance and servicing facility. Figure 45 displays an overview of the Western Layover Yard in greater detail.



Figure 45 Western Layover Yard – Detail (stored trains in teal)

Source: STV

## Operations

### Travel Time

Existing Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains take approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes to travel from Camarillo to Goleta. It should be noted that the most recent timetable for the Surfliner has a large amount of padding due to difficulties having trains meet in Oxnard/Camarillo. Currently trains timetabled to stop in Camarillo pull into the siding and then reverse back out onto the main line, which takes about 10 minutes. With the addition of three stations, commuter rail travel times should increase, while capital improvements should allow trains to travel with fewer holds and station dwells should be shorter for commuter trains than regional trains. Overall, these effects are expected to roughly cancel out and a commuter rail travel time from Goleta to Camarillo is expected to be around 1 hour, 20 minutes.

The intercity rail stringline graphs below (Figure 46 and Figure 47) illustrate how a conceptual schedule for the commuter rail would lay over the existing and conceptual future services. Based on the 2019 Surfliner schedule, some adjustments would need to be considered as the second southbound commuter rail trip in the afternoon (targeting a 4:30PM departure from Goleta) would conflict with a southbound Surfliner trip in the same time frame. In both directions, the commuter rail trips closely mirror the VCTC Coastal Express services, although they add more direct one-seat rides between intermediate points.

### Service

New service would operate three round trips between Camarillo and Goleta on weekdays using four three-car trainsets (one spare). Trains would leave Camarillo in the morning at 30-45 minute headways. They would be serviced and maintained during the day at a maintenance facility in Goleta. In the afternoon/evening, the three trains would return from Goleta to Camarillo and be stored overnight at a new storage facility in Camarillo.

The Union Pacific's westbound Guadalupe Turn (UPRR symbol LOF67) may require further analysis for consistent operations to ensure there are no conflicts in the evening in the Goleta area where the freight train currently blocks the tracks for 20 to 30 minutes several days per week.

Schedule coordination with UPRR and other interchanging railroads such as the SMVRR, or physical plant improvements would be needed to deconflict this movement.

### Southbound Commuter Rail Concept



Figure 46 Expanded Southbound Intercity Rail Opportunities

### Northbound Commuter Rail Concept

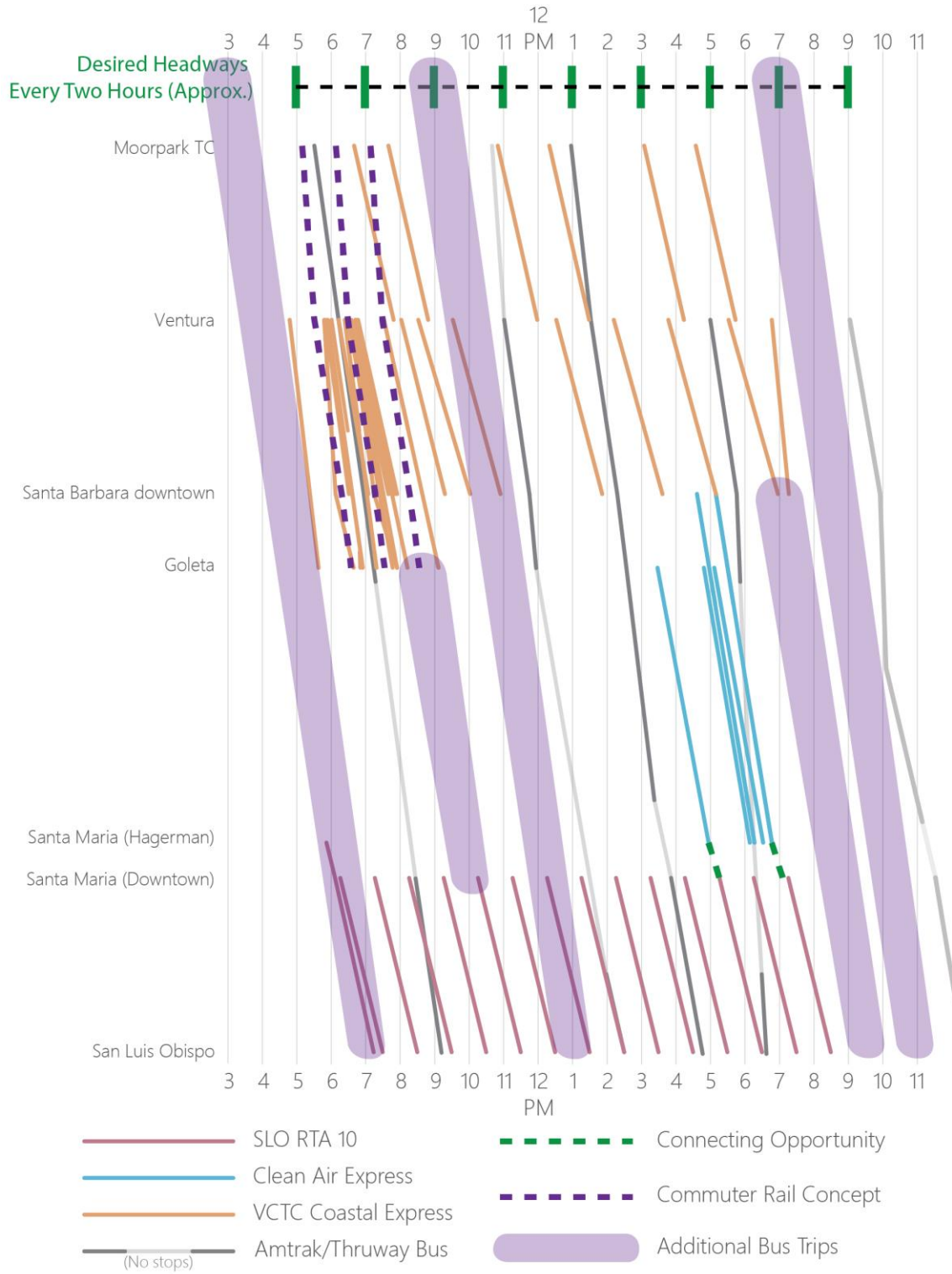


Figure 47 Expanded Northbound Intercity Rail Opportunities

## Vehicles

In order to support the service, preliminary estimates were developed for the lease or purchase of the following used equipment:

- 4 Locomotives
- 12 Coaches
- 4 Cab cars

The availability of used rail vehicles is typically very low. However, in the current market, used Tier 3 locomotives can be purchased for \$2.5M to \$3M, but would require upgrading to Tier 4. Used cab cars are not currently available, so alternative options would be an unpowered locomotive or a new cab car. As for coaches, there are various options with different terms for the possibility of leasing. The lifecycle costs for a purchase of new vehicles versus leased equipment shows that leasing would be less expensive over the long term compared to purchasing new equipment. Cost estimates for vehicles are shown in Table 21.

A more sustainable locomotive option would be to repurpose surplus Metrolink (or other suitable) locomotives with battery cell stacks that power the existing traction motors. The relatively short duty cycle (56 miles, 80 minutes) allows for the implementation of zero emission commuter rail service, which could be partially recharged during the day with a solar PV array at the Goleta maintenance and storage facility.

## Cost Estimates

### Cost Estimate Summary

The estimated capital costs for the commuter rail improvements described in the Definition of Rail Alternative section is summarized in Table 21. Details on individual elements are shown in the Appendix.

*Table 21 Capital Cost Estimate – Goleta to Camarillo Commuter Rail*

| Category                 | Element                   |  | Capital Cost  |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------|
| <b>Vehicles</b>          |                           | New Bombardier coach cars (12 cars)  | \$42M         |
|                          |                           | Four converted battery electric locomotives, rehab/retrofit old locos and/or use retired freight locomotives for battery units | \$20M         |
| <b>Layover Facility</b>  | <i>East</i>               | Camarillo train storage  | \$10M         |
|                          | <i>West</i>               | Storage for Surfliner and commuter trains and maintenance facility   | \$18M         |
| <b>Station Platforms</b> | <i>East</i>               | Wagon Wheel residential development for new platform   | \$2M          |
|                          | <i>West</i>               | Cottage Hospital, use existing pedestrian 101 overcrossing   | \$2M          |
|                          |                           | Goleta Corporate Park  | \$2M          |
| <b>Track Access Fee</b>  |                           | \$40/mile, six weekday trips, 54 miles   | \$3.3M/year   |
|                          |                           | 10 years   | \$33M         |
|                          | <b>Total Capital Cost</b> |  | <b>\$132M</b> |

Commuter rail operating costs vary tremendously across operations in the United States. The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report in April 2021 on the benefits and challenges of commuter rail operations serving “less urbanized” communities<sup>12</sup>. Their work surveyed 31 commuter rail operations around the U.S. which includes a range from the largest systems to very small single-line operations. The GAO also conducted interviews with 10 agencies serving less urbanized areas from across the country, including Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) and Metrolink in California (exemplifying the range of definition for “less urbanized” given Metrolink’s widely varied service area and geographic scope).

Using the GAO report and statistics from the National Transit Database, a wide range of operating costs are observed, whether by cost per revenue hour or per mile. Table 22 shows a selection of nine systems, including four from California. Even among systems within California, costs range from about \$486 to \$836 per revenue hour, and annual costs per mile vary from \$158,000 per mile to \$452,000 per mile. Note that TexRail (Fort Worth) commenced operations in 2019 which may affect statistics. The Downeaster service is included given its coastal nature and the line also serves a combined commuter and university market; however, the service design is more similar to the Surfliner in that it operates five round trips

<sup>12</sup> USGAO *Commuter Rail: Information on Benefits and Funding Challenges for Service in Less Urbanized Communities*. GAO-21-355R Commuter Rail. April 1, 2021. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-355r>

spread throughout the day with only select trips oriented towards the Boston commuter pattern and the service is Amtrak-branded.

Commuter markets, fares, and operating conditions can vary tremendously, and further analysis is required to develop an accurate estimate for the Camarillo-Goleta service.

*Table 22 Selected Commuter Rail Operations Costs*

| Service                                   | Lines | Stations | Directional Route Miles | FY19 Boardings (1,000s) | FY19 Operating Expense (1,000s) | Annual Operating Cost Per Mile (1,000s) | Fare per Psgr. | Cost per Revenue Hour | Psgs per Revenue Hour |
|---|-------|----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>ACE</b><br>(Stockton-San Jose, CA)     | 1     | 10       | 172                     | 1,506                   | \$27,180                        | \$158                                   | \$7.26         | \$691                 | 53                    |
| <b>COASTER</b><br>(San Diego County, CA)  | 1     | 8        | 82                      | 1,409                   | \$19,969                        | \$244                                   | \$3.83         | \$486                 | 35                    |
| <b>Downeaster</b><br>(ME-NH-Boston)       | 1     | 12       | 288                     | 544                     | \$23,056                        | \$80                                    | \$19.29        | \$281                 | 7                     |
| <b>Metrolink</b><br>(Southern CA)         | 7     | 62       | 538                     | 11,935                  | \$243,010                       | \$452                                   | \$6.41         | \$648                 | 34                    |
| <b>Rail Runner</b><br>(Albuquerque, NM)   | 1     | 15       | 193                     | 763                     | \$28,790                        | \$149                                   | \$2.54         | \$808                 | 21                    |
| <b>SMART</b><br>(Sonoma-Marin, CA)        | 1     | 12       | 90                      | 717                     | \$27,490                        | \$305                                   | \$5.71         | \$836                 | 22                    |
| <b>SunRail</b><br>(Orlando, FL)           | 1     | 16       | 49                      | 1,470                   | \$44,571                        | \$910                                   | \$2.13         | \$1,266               | 42                    |
| <b>TEXRail</b><br>(Dallas-Fort Worth, TX) | 1     | 9        | 52                      | 407                     | \$19,189                        | \$369                                   | \$0.89         | \$262                 | 6                     |
| <b>WeGo Star</b><br>(Nashville, TN)       | 1     | 7        | 63                      | 290                     | \$4,595                         | \$73                                    | \$3.35         | \$621                 | 39                    |

## Summary of Expanded Intercity Rail Concepts

Robust infrastructure (both track and stations) is already in place between Goleta and Camarillo, with more planned to allow for expanded passenger rail service. To add commuter rail service would mainly be a function of procuring vehicles and operating rights, with added stations and maintenance facilities as needed to fill in gaps in existing facility capacity. Phasing could be considered to conserve funds, with the main investments needed to begin service being the vehicles. Maintenance and storage could potentially be provided initially at the existing Goleta and Moorpark facilities if needed, and the existing stations in the corridor provide initial service capability. The Wagon Wheel station appears to be the easiest and most effective addition, followed by Goleta West. Cottage Hospital has the most physical constraints and likely highest costs of the initial three stations. Next steps would be to define service requirements in more detail, and to begin discussing potential operating agreements with relevant stakeholders.

The commuter rail concept is envisioned as an overlay service on the future Surfliner pulse schedule, and there are also other efforts which the commuter rail concept could be integrated with. The Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC) envisions the addition of one round-trip long-distance train similar to the Coast Starlight providing service between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area and has been coordinating with the State and other stakeholders towards this goal. As a member of the CRCC, SBCAG supports efforts towards expanded rail service through the Central Coast. This vision is included in the State Rail Plan and was also studied by TAMC and SLOCOG in their respective Network Integration studies, and is not addressed in this study.

# Governance and Oversight of Regional Integrated Services

This section explores the viability of existing governing agencies to deliver the intra-regional service outlined in this study, which could include, new and integrated bus routes, and enhanced coordination with LOSSAN. Where existing agencies may face challenges in delivering this service, case studies and a literature review are used to better understand how other agencies have addressed similar challenges.

The various approaches contained in the documents reviewed for this section all culminated in the same conclusion: there is no one-size-fits-all approach to governance – each jurisdiction has its own historic and institutional differences and missions that must be satisfied through a unique governance structure. However, there are a series of considerations that are of universal importance when coordinating across agencies or expanding service areas:

- **Geographic Reach:** Does the agency’s jurisdiction cover the entire service area? If not, agreements or statutes must be sought to ensure the agency has the authority and stakeholder representation it needs to provide the service.
- **Funding:** New or expanded service requires new funding. Does the agency have a dedicated funding source that provides the stability to make long-term planning decisions and provide continuous service? If not, it may be difficult to provide quality service that is not dependent on disproportionate funding allocations or is too tied to fares and therefore unable to weather economic downturns.
- **Board Structure and Representation:** Does the Board adequately represent the geography of the service area? Is the Board dynamic enough to respond to the evolving needs of its jurisdiction? If not, planning and investment decisions may be skewed towards one subset of the population over another, or be too slow to respond to the needs of the market.
- **Political and/or Statutory Power:** Does the agency have enough political or statutory power to ensure partner agencies are delivering service with regional goals in mind? If not, providing coordinated and integrated service may be a challenge. It is also important that there is a performance-based approach to regional planning to ensure that capital funding and operations decisions do not become overly politicized.

Flexibility and adaptability in these four areas are important not only to respond to market needs and provide quality service, but also to govern effectively.

## Existing Governing Bodies

This study has identified three existing agencies that are the most relevant candidates to oversee the intra-regional transit service: SBCAG, LOSSAN, and the CRCC. Each of these agencies currently operate, fund, and/or facilitate transit service and have a governmental structure that includes member agencies within the study area. Table 23 provides an overview of each of the existing governing bodies.

### **Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG)**

SBCAG is a Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization comprised of eight city agencies within Santa Barbara County as well as the county itself. Some of the member cities operate their own transit service, while SBCAG operates the Clean Air Express regional commuter bus service.

As a regional organization and the Local Transportation Authority, SBCAG is responsible for administering state and federal grants and funding from Measure A, a ½ cent county-wide sales tax that supports transportation including Clean Air Express bus service. SBCAG represents one part of the study area, so implementing intra-regional service through the agency would require coordination with neighboring agencies representing the interests of San Luis Obispo (likely through SLOCOG, which has a similar function to SBCAG), and the County of Ventura (likely through VCTC, which has a similar function to SBCAG).

### **Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor (LOSSAN)**

LOSSAN administers the Pacific Surfliner rail service using state funds. LOSSAN is comprised of member agencies within the study area (San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, and Ventura County) as well other counties outside the study area, so oversight of a new intra-regional transit framework is feasible. The Board of Directors includes elected officials from member agencies and is staffed by the Orange County Transportation Agency. While LOSSAN has representation from the entire study area, the focus of LOSSAN's mission is to provide intercity rail and is heavily weighted towards the dense urban region between San Diego and Los Angeles, so implementing bus service that only operates in the northern region of their service area could be challenging.

### **Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC)**

CRCC acts as an interregional forum to advocate for intercity rail improvements between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The CRCC is currently working with stakeholders to develop new daily train service between San Jose and Los Angeles. CRCC member agencies include SLOCOG, SBCAG, SCCRTC, TAMC, and VCTC, with both LOSSAN and Caltrans serving as participating agencies. CRCC has a Working Group consisting of staff members from member agencies and a Policy Committee consisting of elected officials from each of the member agencies. While CRCC may not have formal authority and funding structures, they may be a suitable organization to host intra-regional bus service given they are not currently operating any transit services that could complicate implementation, and have existing regional partnerships in place with the key stakeholders. SLOCOG provides administrative support for the CRCC.

Table 23 Potential Regional Intercity Transit Oversight

| Agency | Geographic Reach   | Funding Sources   | Board Structure  | Political/Statutory Reach   |
|--------|--|---|--|---|
| SBCAG  | <p><b>Local Governments in Santa Barbara County:</b><br/>Carpinteria<br/>Guadalupe<br/>Lompoc<br/>Santa Barbara<br/>Santa Maria<br/>County of Santa Barbara<br/>Solvang<br/>Buellton<br/>Goleta</p>  | <p><b>Federal Funding:</b> FTA; FHWA<br/><b>State Funding:</b> SB1/SRA; STP; STIP; Other<br/><b>Local Funding:</b> Measure A; TDA sales tax<br/><b>Contracting:</b> Currently contracting CAE service; authority may be limited elsewhere</p>                   | <p><b>Board Representation:</b> Five County Board of Supervisors plus one elected representative (city council) from each member agency<br/><b>Governance Model:</b> Regional Transportation Planning Organization</p>                                       | Only within Santa Barbara County  |
| LOSSAN | <p><b>Nine participating agencies including:</b><br/>SLOCOG<br/>SBCAG<br/>VCTC<br/>LA County MTA<br/>OCTA<br/>NCTD<br/>RCTC<br/>San Diego MTS<br/>SANDAG<br/>Service operating in San Diego, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties</p> | <p><b>Federal Funding:</b> Historically received Federal grants<br/><b>State Funding:</b> Public Transportation Account (sales tax on diesel fuel); TIRCP; SB1/SRA; STIP; Other<br/><b>Local Funding:</b> None<br/><b>Contracting:</b> Within rail corridor</p> | <p><b>Board Representation:</b> Elected officials representing stakeholders and agencies along corridor<br/><b>Governance Model:</b> Joint Powers Authority</p>  | Coordinates passenger rail services and infrastructure improvements, particularly in Southern California metro region. Administers Pacific Surfliner (co-branded with Amtrak) and connecting Thruway Buses between San Diego and San Luis Obispo. |
| CRCC   | <p><b>Five participating agencies including:</b><br/>SLOCOG<br/>SBCAG<br/>SCCRTC<br/>TAMC<br/>VCTC</p>   | <p><b>Federal Funding:</b> None<br/><b>State Funding:</b> SB1/SRA; TIRCP<br/><b>Local Funding:</b> None<br/><b>Contracting:</b> Authority is limited to partnerships with member agencies</p>   | <p><b>Board Representation:</b> Working Group – members of various agencies; Policy Group – elected officials from each a member agency<br/><b>Governance Model:</b> Consensus-building coalition organized via MOU with Working group and Policy Group.</p> | Consensus building council organized by MOU likely lacks authority. Stakeholder agencies agree to improve rail passenger services between San Francisco and Los Angeles via the coastline.  |

There are benefits and challenges to each agency overseeing and delivering intra-regional service.

*Table 24 Benefits and Challenges for Regional Oversight*

| Agency | Benefits  | Challenges   |
|--------|---|--|
| SBCAG  | Lead agency for this Network Integration Study; Regional transportation planning body with existing participation with member agencies; Oversees an established commuter bus service and has authority to contract.                         | Likely would need to develop operating agreements with neighboring counties/COGs and LOSSAN to operate and coordinate regional service.<br><br>No established oversight mechanism for partner agencies (VCTC, SLORTA, others).   |
| LOSSAN | All study area agencies are members of the LOSSAN Board; Oversees intercity passenger services (primarily rail, but also some oversight of Thruway bus); Responsible for super-regional passenger rail integration and service coordination | Agency mission is heavily oriented towards LA-San Diego; Not primarily an intercity bus administrator; Does not own or operate facilities including tracks, ROW, or stations.<br><br>Jurisdiction only includes the rail corridor so it may be difficult to implement bus service. |
| CRCC   | All study area agencies already involved; Funding facilitated by member agency in study area  | Not currently operating transit service and does not currently have authority to administer service.<br><br>Would require formalization through a Joint Powers Agreement.  |

## Addressing the Challenges

As demonstrated in the section above, any agency chosen to oversee and deliver the intra-regional service would need to address a series of governance challenges. While the context and considerations for these challenges may be unique to each agency, the overarching issues are not. This section utilizes lessons learned from a literature and peer agency review to shine light on how other agencies have tackled similar issues.

The literature and peer agencies reviewed include:

### Literature

- ***Getting to the Route of It: The Role of Governance in Regional Transit*** (TransitCenter, Eno Center for Transportation, 2014): This report offers policy recommendations for transit governance based on a series of case studies in Chicago, Boston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York City, and the San Francisco Bay area.
- ***Regional Organizational Models for Public Transportation*** (Transit Cooperative Research Program, 2011): This study utilizes a series of case studies to identify effective organizational models and strategies for successful organizational transformation.

### Peer Review

- **Intra-regional rail agencies:** Caltrain, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART)
- **Other countywide agencies currently operating transit service:** Los Angeles Metro and Ventura County Transportation Commission
- **Intra-regional transit districts:** AC Transit (East Bay Area) and Sound Transit (Puget Sound)

### **Santa Barbara Association of Governments (SBCAG)**

SBCAG's role as the MPO provides a series of benefits for delivering intra-regional service due to the agency's regional focus and control of funding. SBCAG currently provides successful inter-city transit service through the Clean Air Express.

However, the geographic and political authority of SBCAG is limited to county boundaries. Although SBCAG and VCTC have an agreement to fund the Coastal Express service, which could act as a model for how to provide future long-distance service, the current agreement does not have a provision for agency representation (VCTC is the lead agency and policy board for the service). For SBCAG to assume an expanded role in delivering transit service, new operating and funding agreements would be needed. TCRP's *Regional Organizational Models for Public Transportation* (TCRP, 2011) discusses the following options for expanding service boundaries:

- **Operating Agreements with Neighboring Jurisdictions:** Funding and service agreements can be made with neighboring jurisdictions to expand the service boundaries of SBCAG. This would

be especially desirable if an agreement can be made to establish a transit tax in areas receiving service. If this is not feasible, the funding agreement would likely be dependent on general purpose funds from partner jurisdictions, which can be overly politicized and therefore an unreliable funding source. Successful examples of operating agreements to expand service include Charlotte, North Carolina and Syracuse, New York.

### **LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency**

The Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor super-regional focus provides a beneficial lens to delivering intra-regional service in the study area. Further, their geographic extents and therefore their Board, already includes the three study area counties, limiting the need to extend service area boundaries to administer service.

However, LOSSAN's interests are heavily centered on the San Diego-Los Angeles market area. Further, only three of the eleven board votes are based in the study area. This highlights a potential concern over local control of service. The Minneapolis/St. Paul region has addressed similar concerns through the creation of a separate entity, the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), that is responsible for allocating capital funding and acts as a more local check on the MPO's planning decisions. Since the CTIB's creation in 2008, the Met Council (MPO) and CTIB have effectively worked together to provide and expand service in the region.

Further, while OCTA provides bus service and therefore has the planning expertise in-house, LOSSAN is a rail corridor agency that has no emphasis on bus service. To begin providing bus service, the existing interagency transfer agreement with the State of California and joint powers agreement would likely need to be revisited and expanded upon.

### **Coast Rail Coordinating Council**

The Coast Rail Coordinating Council is arguably the most straightforward choice for delivering the intra-regional service. However, their larger geographic boundaries and rail service-oriented mission pose similar benefits and challenges as those discussed for LOSSAN above. Similar actions would likely be required to mitigate these challenges for CRCC. Further, CRCC currently operates under an MOU between partner agencies. Its focus is on planning, advocating, and seeking funding for expanded rail service, but not actually delivering that service. A statutory change similar to that discussed for LOSSAN above would likely be required to provide CRCC the authority to deliver transit service.

### **Other Alternatives**

The primary options for oversight and deliverance of intra-regional transit service explored above have been coordination and expansion of existing agencies in the study area. While this may be the best option, there are other alternatives highlighted in literature that are worthy of discussion:

- **An existing regional agency contracts with a public or private operator to operate the new or expanded interregional service.** An example would be if SLOCOG contracted with SLORTA to operate regional service between San Luis Obispo and Camarillo using external funding or

through a joint funding agreement of the three regional agencies (SLOCOG, SBCAG, VCTC). This type of institutional solution would be a similar but expanded version of how services that connect distant service areas, such as VCTC service to Santa Barbara/Goleta and SLORTA service to Santa Maria are provided now. A variation on this approach would be to develop consensus on a service plan among stakeholders and enable the two regional agencies at the bookends of the service area (RTA and VCTC) to operate 1-2 round trips each using external funding.

- **Creation of a new “overlay” district:** Through this model, a new agency with greater geographic boundaries would be created to deliver the service. The agency would be created either through legislation or through a Joint Powers Agreement. Examples of this type of district include Caltrain (Joint Powers Agreement) and Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (Statute).
- **State-administered service:** The State could administer expanded Thruway bus service to meet the California State Rail Plan goals. The benefit would be building on an already intra-regional service with both rail and bus options. However, the State has moved away from administering rail service in preference of local/regional control, making this a difficult option to pursue.

# Recommendations

**Consider developing agreements between SBCAG, VCTC and SLORTA to create a fare transfer options for through-travelers connecting between Coastal Express, Clean Air Express, and SLORTA Route 10.**

**Consider working with SLORTA and VCTC to assess the feasibility of adjusting select trips to improve transfer opportunities between regional services. The best opportunities include:**

- Operate a revenue 10X trip southbound to Hagerman in the early morning and a northbound from Hagerman in the evening that would connect with the Clean Air Express
- Coordinate scheduling for Clean Air Express Santa Barbara and VCTC Coastal Express trips that are already close in arrival/departure time in downtown Santa Barbara

**Work with SLORTA, VCTC, community partners and economic/tourism organizations to co-advertise and cross-brand new and extended services to attract riders.**

**Evaluate the feasibility of creating additional trips to fill in the Central Segment midday service gap by utilizing vehicles that lay over during the day in Santa Barbara or Ventura.**

- Additional round trips between Santa Barbara and Santa Maria could be operated using out-of-service Clean Air Express and/or Coastal Express buses between the morning and afternoon peak
- Seek additional funds for operation through State and Federal sources and local agreements

**Work with key stakeholders to develop an implementation plan for expanded interregional bus services that would include:**

- New trips to fill in any daytime service gaps greater than two hours with a single-seat trip between Camarillo and San Luis Obispo
- Determination fleet and facility needs for expanded services with the existing providers to ensure adequate maintenance, storage, and passenger amenities identified in the long-term intercity bus concepts
- Pursuit of grant funding for zero-emissions over the road coaches to operate a long-distance pilot program

**Pursue commuter rail opportunity to expand connectivity between the Southern and Central Segments, which partly achieves the State Rail Plan goal of more frequent rail service**

- Work with VCTC, LOSSAN and other regional stakeholders to develop a TIRCP grant application to implement expanded rail service in the study area
- Develop a commuter rail feasibility study that explores the operational implications of a subregional overlay service within the assumptions of the future Surfliner "pulse" schedule, to provide peak period trains serving the Ventura-Santa Barbara commuter market

# Appendices

## Sources and References

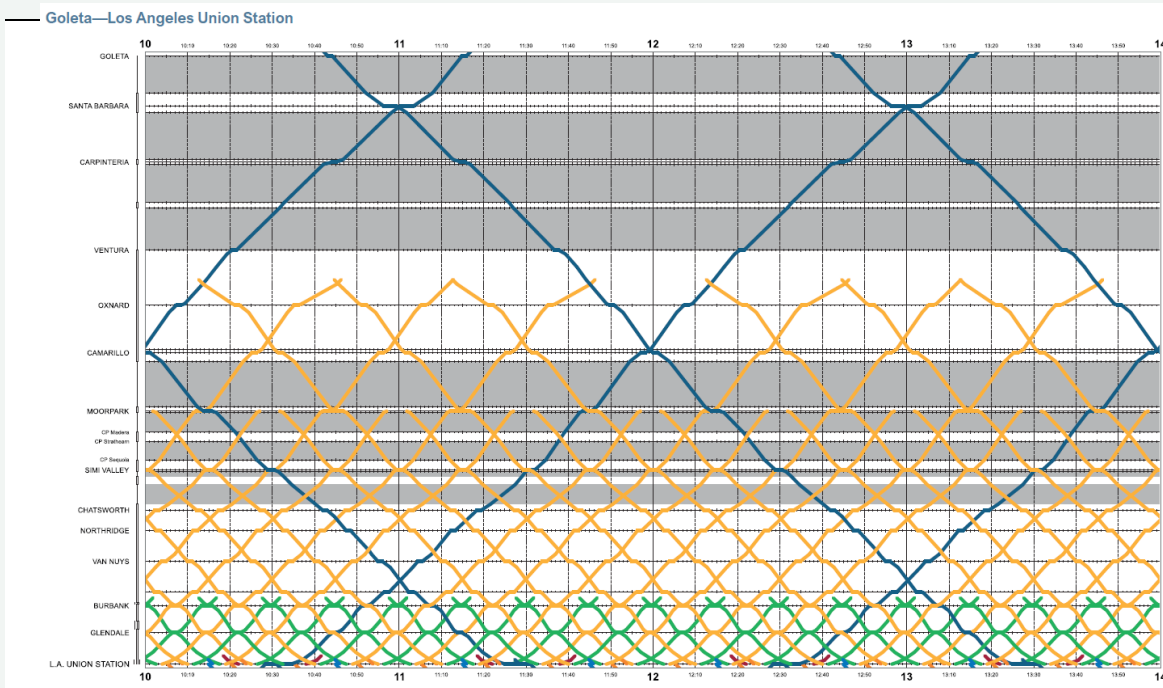
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## Stakeholder Input and Comments

| ID    | Comment  | Location/Page        | Response   |
|-------|--|----------------------|--|
| DOT 1 | Caltrans appreciates the cataloging of existing regional and intercity bus service in the study. Working with SBCAG, these inputs will provide important planning parameters for the now underway California Intercity Bus Study (CIBS) and integrated bus planning for the 2022 State Rail Plan. Caltrans supports efforts to fill in gaps and evolve service in the region into a regularized pulse schedule aligned to the statewide service network. Caltrans extends the offer to provide Technical Service Planning assistance as part of the 2022 SRP Update. Caltrans will reach out to schedule a time for this workshop.   | General              | Noted. Thank you for scheduling the workshop.  |
| DOT 2 | The identified additional passenger rail slots identified in figures 44 and 45 appear problematic in that they conflict with slots identified for existing Pacific Surfliner trains. Separately, the Caltrans' Vision for the statewide network is composed of regularized all-day pulse services designed to make timed connections at hubs around the state. Traditional commuter-rail style operating plans with irregular peak-hour/peak-direction service are generally misaligned to that vision for integrated service and equitable investments in the transport network. Caltrans expects increased peak-hour service or peak-overlays have a role to play in the future statewide service network, but investment priorities will increasingly shift to favor increased regularized services and capital projects that support those operations (like the second track and platform project at Carpinteria) over stand-alone peak-only services. | Pages 63, 85, and 86 | Noted. Following our recent discussions, the SBCAG report will be revised to incorporate the regularized pulse scheduling vision and adapt the commuter rail concept as an overlay.  |
| DOT 3 | Can you provide the details of the Camarillo –Pedestrian Undercrossing project mentioned on page 63?   | Page 63              |  |
| DOT 4 | How do you prioritize Tier 1, 2, and 3? It is unclear why Tier 2 comes before Tier 3 as a priority. Please clarify?  | General              | Based on this and other comments received, the opportunities section will be reoriented to address intercity bus concepts (tiers 1 and 3), and commuter rail concepts (tier 2), in that order. The idea of a sequential approach with commuter rail in the "middle" will be removed. |
| DOT 5 | The 2022 California State Rail Plan intends to maintain service goals identified in the 2018 California State Rail Plan for hourly service to Santa Barbara with bi-hourly service extended to SLO. The stringline below is from the LOSSAN Optimization study, which identifies technical slots for a 2030s horizon with half-hourly service to Ventura County with bi-hourly service to SLO. If aligned to regional goals, Caltrans would support additional hourly service between Ventura County and Santa Barbara; either as an extension of trains to/from Los Angeles or separate runs utilizing the same technical slots. Caltrans would recommend coordinating with the technical work performed by LOSSAN in its optimization study as an example for articulating future technical service slots and integration of regional services into the statewide network.   | General              | Noted. Adaptations to the report will be made as mentioned above.  |

DOT 5



SLOCOG  
1

Your approach to the network integration topic is quite different than ours and TAMC's, too, I think. I actually like that it tackles it from a different perspective and that it is more locally-driven. I think the fact all three of ours vary so much will actually be helpful for the state – it'll give them a few things to think about and different ways to tackle connectivity and increased frequencies through our part of the Central Coast.

General

Noted

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| MTD 1 | When the “advisory group” for this study was pulled together in January 2020, we looked forward to engaging as a transit stakeholder, and future meetings and outreach were promised. The next mention of the study to MTD was an email in May 2021 with the draft plan, asking for meeting availability from the group to review and provide comments. | General      | We acknowledge that engagement with the Advisory Group was limited. The study launched with an advisory group kick-off meeting on July 29, 2019. A second advisory group meeting was held in January 2020 asking for input on the problem framing and potential opportunity design (hub-based system or single-line run-through). MTD was invited and present for both the July 2019 and January 2020 meetings. Given the revised focus of the study following the January 2020 stakeholder meeting, individual discussions with key stakeholders were held during the development of the study, particularly long-distance transit providers such as RTA and VCTC regarding potential new interregional bus service between Camarillo and San Luis Obispo. |
| MTD 2 | [Theme of comments overall: Local bus services should be much more integrated in this study]  | 20 / General | In the funding agreement for this study, the State directed SBCAG to examine the potential to improve connectivity between regions, specifically connectivity between long-distance bus services and between these services and the Pacific Surfliner intercity rail service, given the 160-mile-long study area incorporates three counties, it was necessary to limit the study to very high-level incorporation of the 12 (or more) local bus operators. The study acknowledges the importance of local transit providers as playing an important role in expanding the reach of intercity bus and rail service.   |
| MTD 3 | In no section of the TIRCP guidelines is there a mention that a local transit district contained wholly within a UZA not be relevant to network integration....   | General      | TIRCP guidelines are relevant for grant applications rather than grant awards. The 2017 TIRCP cycle did not have Network Integration funding as an eligible expense, and SBCAG did not request this funding as part of its application for the Goleta train station project. Subsequent to receiving funding for Network Integration planning, SBCAG worked with Caltrans and CalSTA to develop a scope of work for this study.   |

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| MTD 4 | The idea that local transit is mostly useful as a first/last mile connection is not based in fact, and the study uses this concept to wave off the fact that local transit agencies like Santa Barbara MTD are extremely relevant... If the measure is transit services operating buses on the US 101, why ignore the agency that has more transit service on 101 than any other? | General | The measure as stated in the study is not simply bus service operating on US-101, but also that it is long-distance service linking the northern, central, and southern study segments together between one urban area to another; these urban areas are defined as San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria/Guadalupe, Goleta/Santa Barbara, and Ventura/Oxnard, which are communities served unequally by the Surfliner. The study does not “wave off” the relevance of local transit service, but instead recognizes the importance of local transit services while at the same time defining a narrow focus on evaluating how travel between distant regions with limited or no connecting services can be improved. The report has been revised to incorporate the local and subregional bus services and their express/US-101-based routes more explicitly. |
| MTD 5 | MTD is also the only agency without a reference to their SRTP.  | 30      | MTD is not the only transit agency whose SRTP is not referenced. Of the 12 of local transit agencies in the study area, the study mentions the SRTPs of SLORTA, SBCAG, SMAT (related to the Breeze service) and VCTC, services which the study defines as intercity “backbone” service operators.   |
| MTD 6 | There isn’t a real description or quantification of the markets that the proposals would serve. Real people take rail and bus for real reasons—to get around their communities, leisure and business travel, and work and school commutes.  | 32      | The report includes a travel market analysis which addresses the observed travel patterns across the 160-mile study area. It is not within the scope of the study to delve into an analysis of subregional (as in, geographies smaller than the three segments which make up the basis of this study) travel patterns, which is studied regularly through other local processes including agency STRPs, the MPO’s RTP/SCS updates, and other focused studies, some of which are referenced in this report. The implicit assumption of the market is to better serve people who want to travel between the three identified regions. The revised draft study adds language to make this assumption explicit.   |
| MTD 7 | The lack of integration and coordination with all transit services in the study region could mean real financial consequences for those agencies who might seek funding for future projects.  | General | SBCAG and the consultant team have had regular check-in calls with Caltrans and periodic involvement with CalSTA throughout the development of the study and this draft report. Evaluating how to coordinate the 12 local transit services with the four long distance bus and rail services in the study area is not the scope of this study.  |
| MTD 8 | We request that the consultant work with Santa Barbara MTD and other local transit agencies to better understand and integrate local transit services and facilities into this study.   | General | Evaluating how to coordinate the 12 local transit services with the four long distance bus and rail services in the study area is not the scope of this study.  |

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| MTD 9  | It also doesn't take into account any local service that might connect Coastal Express passengers up with the Clean Air Express, though they certainly exist. If the idea in Tier 1 is about connecting trips, not about one seat rides, why wouldn't an express MTD service be an acceptable connecting trip? | 55      | The revised draft study will include a statement to clarify that with a baseline of limited single-seat service, the objective is to minimize the number of transfers required for passengers traveling through more than one study segment. As identified by the State, the goal of the study is to determine if there are any opportunities to better directly connect or interline long-distance services with one another in the study area. |
| MTD 10 | In light of this, it would seem more prudent to embrace that expansion of Surfliner service (moving to 2-hourly and then hourly service), and move forward with the suggestions outlined in Tier 3 before considering investment in the creation a new regional commuter rail agency.                          | 89      | SBCAG continues to pursue the 101 in Motion/Lane and a Train strategy to address traffic congestion on the 101 corridor. In light of recently released information about the State's goals for "pulsed" intercity rail service, regionally-focused commuter rail can be pursued as an overlay for future two-hour Pacific Surfliner service.   |
| MTD 11 | Tier 3 discusses new intercity bus service as laid out in the CSRP 2027 vision, and makes a great deal of sense. Why wouldn't this be executed before Tier 2?  | 89      | Given the stakeholder feedback, the Opportunities chapter will be modified to remove the "Tier" descriptions and reorient the discussion so that filling the service gaps with bus service is considered independently of the commuter rail concept. The tiers in the draft study were not intended to represent prioritization.   |
| MTD 12 | With the HOV lane almost complete, our region has the opportunity to try this. With robust and regular bus service on the 101 using the HOV lane, congestion and VMT can be reduced.   | 89      | Comment noted.   |
| MTD 13 | It is our opinion that travelers and commuters don't care what the rail service is called or who operates it, as long as it's convenient, efficient, and affordable.   | 89      | Comment noted.   |
| MTD 14 | The study also only mentions capital costs for implementing Tier 2 (some of which seem underestimated) and not ongoing operating costs.  | 88      | Conceptual operating cost estimates will be incorporated in the revised draft.   |
| MTD 15 | The concept that a train would be able to efficiently move between stations less than 2 miles apart is not born out in reality.  | 84      | Rail engineering/planning firm STV provided technical assistance on this chapter and while there are potential issues including inefficiency with traditional locomotives, there are workable alternatives with zero-emission locomotives. This is a conceptual study, not a feasibility study. There are other commuter rail operations, including Metrolink, with stations that are two or fewer miles apart.                                  |
| MTD 16 | The station locations mentioned do not have parking facilities, easy access on foot or by bike, or any other amenities. This portion is written as if as all travelers will work right next to the tracks.   | 70      | The purpose of these commuter rail platforms is to serve employment locations within walking distance of the stations. This approach is common in other commuter rail services in the nation.  |
| MTD 17 | It seems that SBCAG is in the process of acquiring a facility of their own in Goleta. This should be mentioned in the study document.  | General | SBCAG closed escrow on a regional transit facility on June 7, 2021; this narrative will be updated in the revised document.  |

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| MTD 18 | <p>[Governance and Oversight of Regional Integrated Services] This section needs much more work as it seems to be written in a very leading fashion, with all signs set up to point towards SBCAG. Why wouldn't VCTC be included in the list since it already manages rail and intercity bus in a portion of the corridor? Why wouldn't MTD be considered as an existing regional transit governing body?</p> | 96 | <p>Although three agencies are identified in the study as potential candidates for an oversight body for new interregional rail and/or transit service, as illustrated in Tables 20 and 21, all three organizations have benefits and drawbacks for assuming this role. The study does not provide a recommendation regarding which agency may be the best positioned to provide oversight. In discussions following the dissemination of the draft study to stakeholders, SBCAG and the consultant team have identified an alternative delivery method for operating long distance bus service, which is described in the revised document.</p> <p>Given the origins and terminations of potential new bus service in Camarillo and San Luis Obispo, the service area of MTD relative to the study area, and the existence of other governing bodies that already include representation from all regional stakeholders, MTD is not presently an appropriate governing body for service stretching across three counties.</p> |
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